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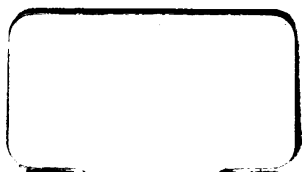
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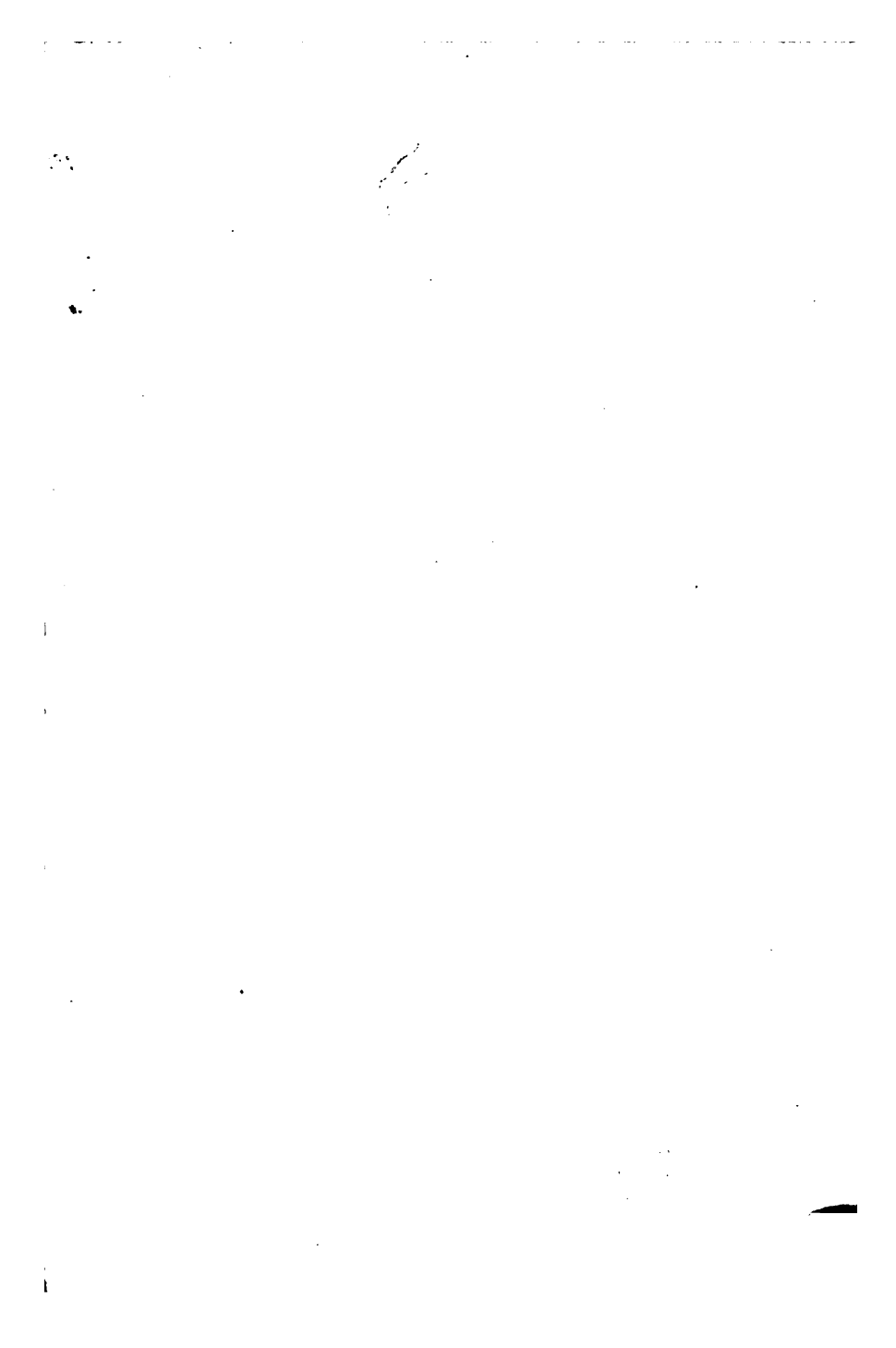
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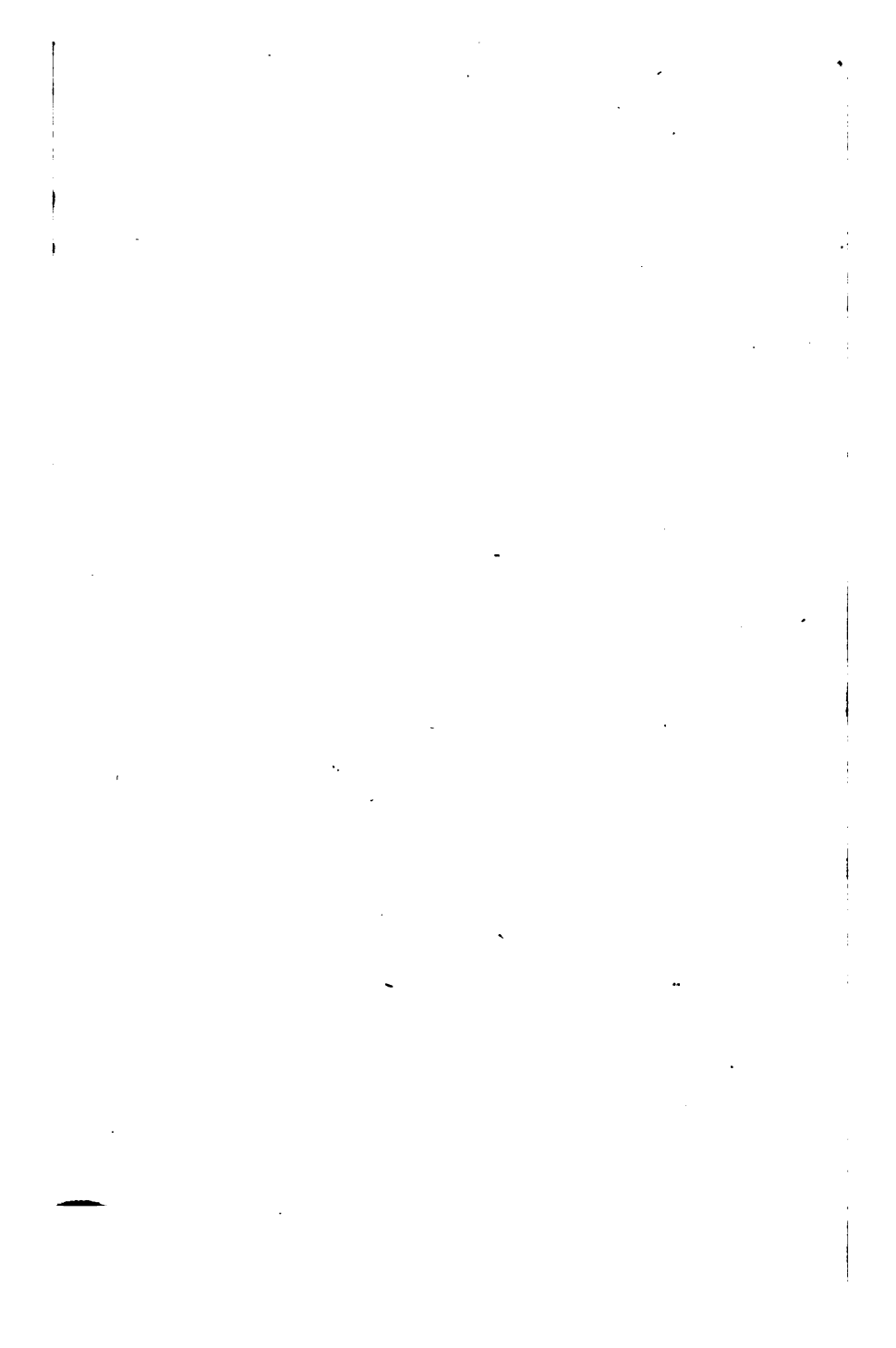
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BIOGRAPHICAL OUTLINES
OF
ENGLISH LITERATURE.

BY DAVID PRYDE, M.A.

For the Use of Schools.

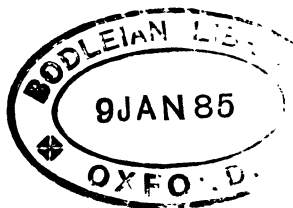
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PREFACE.

THIS work is distinctly a School-book. It makes no pretensions to philosophical method or completeness. Everything has been planned and stated with the view of making it clear and interesting to youthful minds.

The less notable authors I have mentioned very shortly. They made no deep impress upon the Literature; and many of them are now very seldom read, even by literary men. Like a crowd of ordinary, though highly respectable persons, they would merely confuse the minds of the young, and prevent them from concentrating their attention upon the important characters in the great spectacle. Only the founders and moulders of taste and opinion have been described at length. These are representative men, and embody in their works the various characteristics of their respective ages. Accordingly, they occupy, as it were, the foreground of the picture, and the less remarkable writers retire, in the character of followers or attendants, into the background.

A piece of criticism by itself is a mere patch of information. It is fixed to no palpable fact, and is apt to elude the grasp of the mind. A framework of biographical details is necessary, on which it may be hung up to view. Its consistency will then be apparent, and the reason of its shape and complexion may very often be detected. The notice of an Author, therefore, has, in most cases, been introduced by a short biography.

Every biography should present some outstanding feature. In proportion to the prominence of this feature, is the consistency and interest of the biography. I have, therefore, endeavoured to make the details bring out this characteristic. Wherever it was possible, these details have also been made to suggest the personal character of the writer under review.

I have not attempted to make the length of the notices strictly proportionate to the importance of the respective Authors. When the materials have been interesting, their interest has not been destroyed by undue condensation. When they have been meagre or unimportant, they have not been drawn out to fill up a prescribed space. The nature of the estimate, and not the quantity of the letterpress, has been made the index of the relative greatness of the different Authors.

D. P.

EDINBURGH, *February*, 1862.

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1350-1509.

Characteristics :—The subjects more natural, and the diction more melodious and expressive.

*Improvement of Society, and its Good Effect upon the Literature—
Relics of the Dark Ages, and their Bad Effect upon the Literature.*

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THE AGE OF THE REFORMATION.

1509-1558.

Characteristic :—An earnest practical spirit expressing itself in the plainest and most direct language.

*New Agencies—Revival of Classical Learning—The Reformation—The
Art of Printing—Effect of these Agencies on Literature.*

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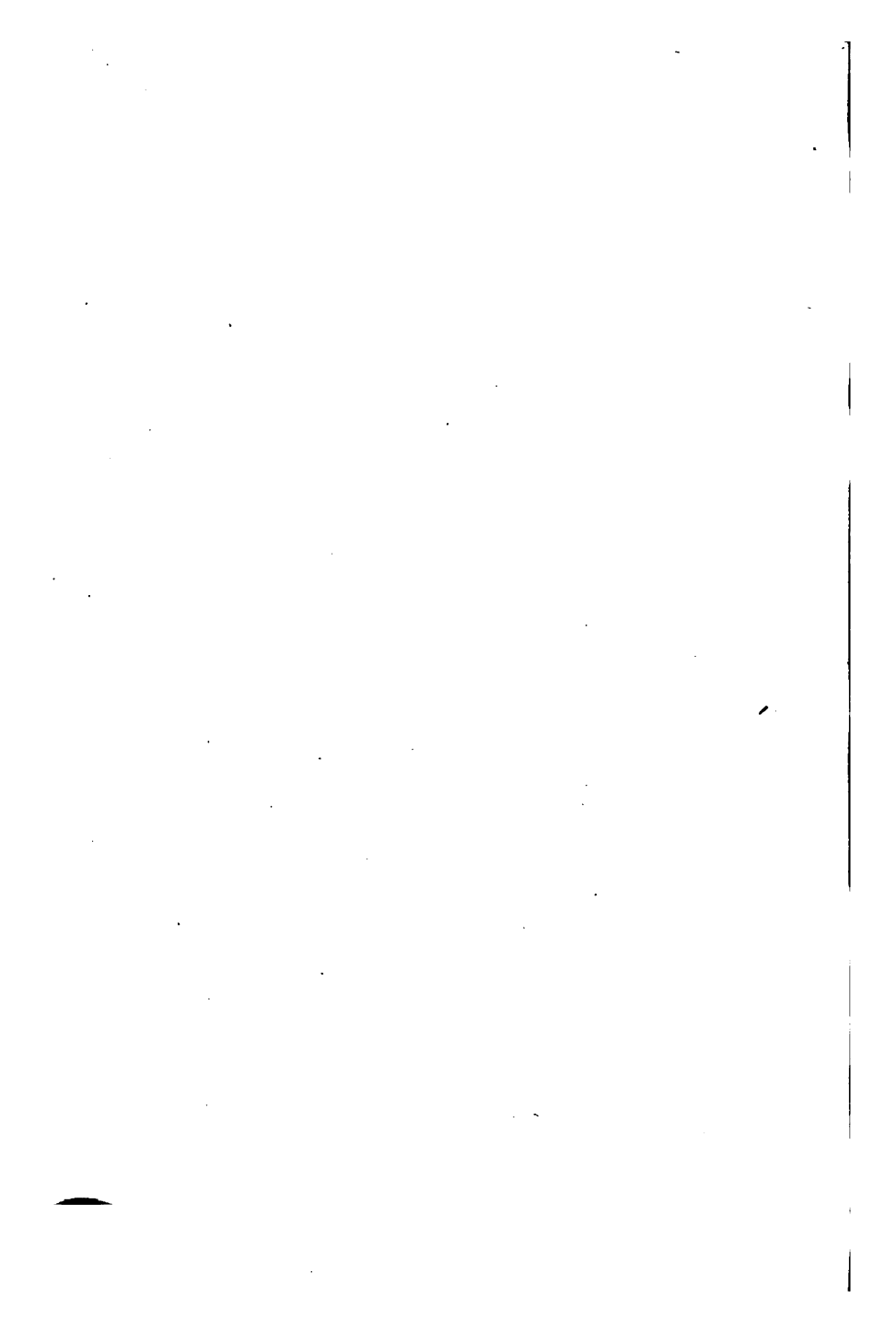
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BIOGRAPHICAL OUTLINES

OF

ENGLISH LITERATURE.

INTRODUCTION.

THE LITERATURE of a nation is the speech of a nation. To a certain extent it expresses the national condition, culture, feelings, and ideas. Literary history, therefore, is worthy of a place among systematic studies, and should stand side by side with the political history of the country to which it belongs.

Since Literature is the index of society, its character must vary as the character of society varies. If a people are barbarous and superstitious, their literature must be rude and legendary. If they are enslaved and debased, it must be sordid and immoral. If they are free and enlightened, it must be high-toned and intellectual. Of course, we shall occasionally meet with writers who seem to be uninfluenced by the social condition of their age; but it will be found that they are mere exceptions to a general rule, and that they differ from their co-temporaries in their literary character, simply because they differ from them in their moral character. Accordingly, in the following pages we shall state the social characteristics of each period, and shall deduce from these the literary characteristics of each period.

Since the changes in literature are caused by the changes in society, a literary epoch will coincide with a social epoch. The history of English literature there-

fore resolves itself into *Nine* Periods, differing most distinctly from each other in their general aspects. In the *First* period, the English tongue is slowly and tediously forming itself out of several meagre, rugged, and discordant elements. In the *Second* period, the tongue has become a *language*, able to describe character in terms not unprecise, and to express poetical ideas in numbers not unmelodious. The *Third* period shews a yearning after enlightenment and freedom. The writers are uneasy and discontented, fretting and chafing under the bonds with which a false taste and a corrupt religion have long hampered them. In the *Fourth* period, they have shaken off their fetters, and, headed by some gigantic souls, have burst forth into the fresh and varied fields of thought, with all the exuberant strength and joyousness of asserted freedom. Then follows a relapse in the *Fifth* period. Spiritless and truckling, polite literature assumes the debased morality of the restored Charles, and submits to the laws of French literary taste. But this condition is too abnormal to continue long; and the principle of health soon begins to stir. In the *Sixth* period, accordingly, the immorality is thrown away. In the *Seventh* period the revival continues. That part of the French laws which is bad is cast aside, and a spirit of originality begins once more to breathe through the province of letters. At length, along with the *Eighth* period, the full glory of the English language returns. A host of great men appear, less original and less imaginative than the minds of the former great age, but at the same time more tasteful and more equable. And if this splendour abates when we enter the *Ninth* period, it is not because literature is degenerating in itself, but because it has fewer great authors to shed a lustre round it.

There is another respect in which literature is coincident with society. Its progress towards excellence, as may be seen from the preceding paragraph, is not uniform. It does not move onward in a direct line, like an army on the march, but with ebbing and flowing waves, like the advancing tide.

FIRST PERIOD.

THE AGE OF THE FORMATION OF THE LANGUAGE.

449-1350.

Characteristics:—Meagreness in diction, and clumsiness in execution.

Illiterate State of the Saxons—Spirit of their Literature—Style of their Poetry—Caedmon—Bede—Alfred—The Saxon Chronicle. Norman Invasion—Extinction of Saxon Literature under the Normans—Improvement of the Saxon Tongue into Old English—Its Triumph over the Norman-French.

THE founders of the English language were the Saxons, a horde of brawny and masterful pirates from the Elbe and the Rhine, who effected a footing in England in the fifth century. Unlike the other invaders of this country, they introduced nothing but new and appalling forms of ignorance and barbarity. For many years afterwards, the gloom of the Dark Ages, which brooded over the whole of Europe, settled down in denser clouds upon this isolated land. The chiefs thought of nothing but high-handed violence, bloodshed, hunting, and carousing. The rest of the savages, when left to themselves, were engrossed with the cultivation of the small patches of cleared soil around their dingy cabins. The language, accordingly, was rude, fluctuating, composed of several dialects, and capable of expressing nothing above the bare wants of their nature. There was not the mere semblance of a literature. Nor was this state of affairs very much improved by the introduction of Christianity in the sixth century. The only scholars, were a few of the candidates for holy orders; the only schools, were a very few of the monasteries; and the only teachers, were an extremely limited number of the Clergy. If any works were written, they

were written in Latin. An Anglo-Saxon of that day would no sooner have thought of composing in Anglo-Saxon, than a Scottish writer of the present day would think of composing in broad Scotch. Even when, at length in the seventh century, a national literature began to appear, it was speedily checked by the calamities that attended the invasions of the Danes. Swarm after swarm of these daring sea-rovers made descents upon the coasts, or sailed up the navigable streams into the very heart of the land. Nothing was spared. Towns, monasteries, corn-fields, were burned to ashes. The entire country was one battlefield; and, for several generations, a hand-to-hand struggle was waged for the bare soil on which the combatants fought. Learning was scared from the land; and a few writers only remained to record the scenes of bloodshed.

Those few authors that lived during this long and troublous period were notable for their independent spirit. They had that sound severe sense of the practical and the useful, for which the Anglo-Saxon race of the present day is distinguished. They did not, like the great majority of writers in a rude age, exclusively adopt legends for their subjects, and rhythmical numbers for their mode of expression. Their themes were generally Biblical translations, and religious and ethical treatises; and what they wished to state, they frequently stated in plain direct prose.

Anglo-Saxon poetry is very peculiar. It does not consist of a certain number of *feet* like Latin verse, or of a certain number of *syllables* like English verse. Its distinctive feature is what has been called *alliteration*. Each stanza must have among its words two or more syllables beginning with the same letter; and this is almost the only circumstance which distinguishes it from prose.

The only authors of this period worthy of particular notice are three,—one distinguished in poetry, and two in prose:—

CAEDMON.—The first Anglo-Saxon poet of any note is Caedmon, who lived in the seventh century. His

poetical genius is fabled by Bede to have been developed in a miraculous manner. Brought up as the common drudge and cowherd at the monastery of Whitby, he was so ignorant that he could not repeat those ditties chanted by the peasants at their field labour. Yet he had deep feelings, and was keenly alive to his own ignorance. When the song went round the evening fire in the hall, he blushed because he could not take his part. One night he slunk away, more vexed than ever, to his pallet of straw in the stable. In his sleep a stranger appeared; and, in a manner that would not brook denial, commanded him to sing the Creation. Spontaneously the numbers flowed from his tongue, and when he awoke he found that he had received the gift of song. The fame of this miracle reached the abbess; and the rest of his career was determined. He was enrolled among the Whitby monks; was initiated into all the learning of the time; and devoted the remainder of his life to sacred poetry.

A collection of Caedmon's sacred poems is still extant. Their themes are incidents, either directly furnished or suggested by the Bible. Many parts are clumsily constructed, and the versification is marked by the fantastic method of alliteration; but there are several passages which are grand and solemn, and which vaguely anticipate some of the sublime scenes in Milton's *Paradise Lost*.

BEDE.—One of the first Saxons who stooped to write in the plain vernacular, was the "Venerable Bede," who is said by Hallam to have been "superior to any man the world then possessed." He was born in the shire of Durham towards the close of the seventh century, and entered the monastery of Wearmouth at the age of seven. The sacred repose of the cloister was a congenial abiding-place for this pure and meditative spirit. The Pope, who had heard of his learning, tried in vain to lure him away from it. He remained there during the rest of his life, a calm and humble-minded student, a notable figure in the midst of an uneasy and

rapacious age. There was not a province of learning which he left unexplored ; and it would be tedious to enumerate the subjects on which he wrote Latin treatises. Age and disease only stimulated his desire to enlighten mankind. Prostrate on his deathbed, and panting with asthma, he dictated a Saxon translation of the Gospel of John ; and with the last word of the sacred book, he breathed out his devout soul. Bede's *History of the Church of the Angles*, which was translated into Saxon by King Alfred, is still a standard authority for the annals of that period.

ALFRED.—In spite, however, of such great scholars, Britain would have advanced very little in civilisation had it not been for the glory of that age—King Alfred, who was born in 849. The heroism of this great man was developed under the severest trials. For many years, flood after flood of wild Danes ceased not to inundate his kingdom. After these had been effectually expelled, or partly subdued, society was still weltering and surging under the effect of the recent tempests ; and it required careful tact and unflagging energy to allay the excitement. At the same time, there was not a single hour in which his frame was not racked by an acute and inveterate disease. Yet in the midst of all these harassing troubles the love of learning still survived. It now became his aim to introduce the light of letters into his dark realm. He invited men of learning from different parts of the Continent ; he planted schools throughout the country ; and he insisted that noblemen should educate their sons. That example might not be wanting to precept, he himself became a most indefatigable book-maker. Learning Latin at the age of forty, he began to translate out of that language into Saxon. The subjects of these translations, and the manner in which they were executed, showed his earnest and philanthropic spirit. The translations were generally from the Bible, or from such religious and moral works as *The Treatise of Gregory the Great on the Duties of the Clergy*, the *Ecclesiastical History of Bede*, and Boethius *On the Consolation of Philosophy* ; and when there was any occasion, he did

not hesitate to incorporate with the originals any practical precepts that might be suggested. This illustrious man died in 901, leaving a memory that has ever been cherished in the hearts of his countrymen.

SAXON CHRONICLE.—One of the most useful monuments of those times is the Saxon Chronicle, a collection of annual registers, which appear to have been gleaned from various monasteries. The writers are those monks who were employed at the end of each year to record the remarkable events of the preceding twelve months. In the earlier parts they seem to have copied from each other, or from some common authority, such as Bede. In the latter parts they have evidently written independently of each other.

NORMAN CONQUEST.

The lamp of Saxon literature, which had been kindled by Alfred, and which had continued to burn even under subsequent Danish invasions, was completely extinguished by the Norman Conquest in 1066. It is true, indeed, that the chivalrous invaders introduced along with themselves an atmosphere of literary taste. Their kings, selfish and grasping though they were, patronised learning. Great scholars were brought over from the Continent and placed in rich benefices. Seats of learning were established throughout the land. There appeared in the course of two centuries many works,—romances in French; and theological treatises, scientific theories, histories, and poems, in Latin. Yet all the while, the Saxons, the real founders of our national literature, were degraded and ground down to the very dust. Their language was despised as a vulgar jargon, fit only for serfs and swineherds. If any of their boys were sent to school, they were compelled to construe their Latin into French. If any of themselves wished to pass for educated gentlemen, it was necessary that they should talk in French. There were no scholars who could read Saxon; and, consequently, for two centuries there were no writers who wrote Saxon. The only

work that was composed during this period in the vernacular was a continuation of the Saxon Chronicle; and this, after dragging out an obscure old age, died a natural death in 1154.

But though the Saxon literature had been extinguished, the Saxon language was a thing that all the lordly contempt of the Normans could never extinguish. The sturdy Saxons, who had breathed their soul into it at the very first, still impressed upon it the sterling qualities of their character. As *they* still cherished a strong and unfettered spirit; so *it* still held a principle of force and vitality. As *they* were slowly evolving their shrewd and practical genius; so *it* was gradually transforming itself into a direct and forcible mode of speech. Accordingly, about the middle of the thirteenth century, it became evident that the language had undergone a decided change. One of its dialects had gained the ascendancy, and had absorbed whatever was good in the others. Many clumsy inflections and intricate constructions had been thrown off, and simpler forms assumed. Without laying itself under any very great debt, it had enriched itself by borrowing some words from the French. In fact, it had now become what philologists call Old English, a language not unlike our Modern English, and a language sufficiently pliant and expressive to be used for any purpose. All that it required, in order to become the speech of the nation, was a fair opportunity; and this opportunity soon occurred.

After the loss of the English possessions in France, in the reign of John, the Normans had been forced to forego the custom of spending most of the year in Normandy. Confined within their island, they had taken up their permanent abode among the rude natives whom they despised. In the course of two or three generations their love for the Continent had begun to decline. The war with France in the reign of Edward III. completed this change. The descendants of those haughty Normans who had considered the word *Englismān* synonymous with *slave* now gloried in the title; he who spoke French was considered a foreigner; and the English language became the language of the nation.

SECOND PERIOD.

THE AGE OF CHAUCER, AND HIS SUCCESSORS

1350-1509.

Characteristics :—The subjects more natural, and the diction more melodious and expressive.

*Improvement of Society, and its Good Effect upon the Literature—
Relics of the Dark Ages, and their Bad Effect upon the Literature.*
POETS :—*Langland—Chaucer—Barbour—James I. of Scotland—
Dunbar—Other Poets.*

PROSE WRITERS :—*Mandeville—Wyckliffe—Other Writers.*

THIS period was decidedly the birth-time of the present English nation. The character of the mass of the people had been raised simultaneously with their language. Students of all orders crowded to the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge. There was a general enlightenment abroad. An ordinary man in the middle classes of society could read and write; knew a little Latin and French; and was not altogether ignorant of foreign countries. As a necessary result, a sense of right and propriety began to manifest itself among all classes. The serfs, dumb and dull though they generally were, frequently winced, and recalcitrated, and broke loose under severe taxations. The enlightened community, although they seldom went so far as the thorough-going Wyckliffe, raised their protest against the corruptions of the Clergy. The Parliament persisted in refusing the pecuniary demands of the Pope, and defied all his threats of fulmination. Nay, about twenty years after the death of Wyckliffe, the House of Commons petitioned the King to take possession of the Church property. This spirit of activity and improvement in the social world could not fail to have a good effect upon

the literature of the country. The close monastic damp which had brooded so long over the world of letters began to be dispersed by fresh airs from the world without. The authors were no longer exclusively members of the cloister, but generally men of the world. If not profound in monkish lore, they had the far higher accomplishment of an enlightened understanding. Overstepping the narrow confines of professional opinions, their minds had come under the different influences of public life; and, to a certain extent, they sympathised with the wants, and discerned the vices, of their own particular age. Accordingly, their works are of a more popular cast than those of the preceding period. Their subjects are more allied to ordinary life; their language is more precise and expressive; and their poetry is thrown into the more palpable form of rhyme. Frequently they stigmatise the glaring vices and discuss the agitated questions of the day. Even their propensity to romance and allegory mainly arises from their desire to gratify the tastes of the public.

But though this period saw the dawning of freedom and enlightenment, there were still many relics of the Dark Ages. Feud and bloodshed were the favourite occupations throughout the whole island. In Scotland the plundering raids of the northern caterans, and the bloody wranglings of the nobles, distracted the public mind. In England affairs were still worse. The fruitless invasions of France drained the very life-blood of the nation. Then the protracted Wars of the Roses wrenched asunder the framework of society, and turned the land into one vast whirlpool of vicissitude and excitement. The result was, that sages could not meditate, and poets could not sing, amid such a ceaseless sounding of the war-trumpet. In the next two centuries after Chaucer, the great authors are very few, and chiefly belong to Scotland.

LANGLAND.—The greatest of Chaucer's predecessors, and a vigorous portrayer of the manners of his time, was Robert Langland. All that is known regarding him is, that he was a secular priest, and wrote a

poem called the *Vision of Piers Plowman*, which appeared in 1362. In this work the poet represents himself as taking a stroll on a May morning on the Malvern Hills. Laying himself down to rest on the bank of a brook, he is lulled to sleep by the babble of the waters, and beholds a series of visions arise before him. These visions are nothing else than allegories, affected, complicated, and prolix, after the manner of the age. They are intended to lash the enormities of the time, and especially the loose lives of the clergy. The plan, though confused, is in many parts vigorously executed. The portraits of the allegorical personages are drawn in a broad and masterly style; the blows of satire are heavy and well-planted; and the frequent warnings of a coming doom impart a serious tone to the whole composition. The *Vision of Piers Plowman* is also notable as our best perfect specimen of alliteration, a style of verse which was fast passing out of use, and which the popularity of this poem only served to detain a little longer.

CHAUCER.—The language, however, was still like an instrument, whose exquisite capabilities **B. ab. 1328.** had not been thoroughly tested, and which **D. 1400.** yet required a master-hand to show how useful and effective it could be. This master-hand appeared in 1328, in the person of Geoffrey Chaucer, the Father of English Poetry, and the first of England's literary giants. In his case fortune was almost as lavish of its gifts as nature had been. His father, who is supposed to have been a London merchant, gave him the very best education that the times could supply. He was sent, in succession, to Cambridge and to Oxford. Leaving the University with a competent knowledge of Latin, he was enrolled in one of the Inns of Court. He then went abroad, to polish his manners, to ventilate his opinions, and to enlarge his acquaintance with mankind. The next scene of Chaucer's life represents him in the character of a fascinating and successful courtier. King Edward III. is charmed with his genius, and gives him a place near his own chivalrous

person. The princely John of Gaunt makes him his especial favourite. His daily companions are those high-souled nobles, the heroes of Cressy and Poitiers. With his handsome bearing and witty conversation he wins the hand of a knight's daughter. At the same time he is employed in honourable embassies, and is receiving lands, houses, pensions, and lucrative offices. But, fortunately for Chaucer's poetical fame, this engrossing scene did not last. In the reign of Richard II., a dispute about the election of a Lord Mayor involved him in a quarrel with the Court. To escape arrest he was forced to flee to the Continent, and to drag out several years of banishment in great poverty. On his return he was thrown into the Tower; and it was only after he confessed his misdemeanours that he was set free. Cured of ambition, but not impaired in activity, he devoted himself to the more congenial task of composing his *Canterbury Tales*. In executing this wonderful representation of many-coloured life, his mind found full scope for its vigorous and well-trained energies, and for its full and various stores of experience. He had only reached the middle of his task when he died, in 1400.

Chaucer was the author of many minor poems, written in the earlier part of his life. Of these, some are paraphrases from the Latin, French, and Italian; and the others are, to a certain extent, disfigured by the grotesque conceits common to that period. The only work in which his genius receives full and free play, is the *Canterbury Tales*. In this poem the author, like a great magician, conjures up from the dust and darkness of the past his own age, with its strangely equipped figures and its quaint phraseology. When the curtain rises, we see the Tabard Inn, Southwark, as it appeared in 1383. Thither assemble a motley throng of pilgrims, some on horseback, some on foot, all bound for the shrine of the blessed St Thomas of Canterbury. After they have been mustered, they are found to amount to thirty (including the poet himself, and the innkeeper), and to consist of representatives from nearly all the different grades of society in the

whole extent of the land. As they stand before us, the poet, in an easy and masterly style, describes the personal appearance, the accoutrements, the character, and the peculiarities of each; at one time stirring our deepest sympathies by his earnest and dignified tone; at another time, provoking our laughter by his genial and overflowing humour. There are the Knight, the perfect ideal of suavity and honour; the Squire, a gallant and gay young exquisite; the Franklin, or country gentleman, a red-faced, snowy-bearded epicure. Then come a prim, affected Prioress; a burly, chase-loving Monk; a sly, time-serving Friar; a devoted country Parson; a thread-bare Clerk of Oxford; and a fussy Sergeant-of-Law. Among the crowd of less peculiar persons, we see the Wife of Bath, with her outward show of respectability and religion; the Miller, with the thews and sinews of Hercules; and the Reeve or Bailiff, with his spindle-shanks, smooth-shaven face, close-cropped head, and keen and cunning eyes. Since they are bent upon a religious act, which in their opinion will compensate for every shortcoming, they are resolved to enjoy life to the utmost. Accordingly, as they sit at supper in the large room of the Inn, a plan is suggested for beguiling the long rough journey. It is proposed that they should have a competition in story-telling; that each should tell two tales, the one in going and the other in coming back; that the Inn-keeper should be the umpire; and that they should re-assemble in the Tabard, on their return, to hear the name of the successful competitor announced. The proposal is accepted; and as they trudge and trot along the Kentish roads, the narrative proceeds amid alternate bursts of admiration and chuckles of merriment. Coming from such a wondrous diversity of persons, the stories are very different. Some are vivid descriptions of chivalrous deeds and romantic adventures; others are tenderly pathetic tales of love and disaster; and not a few are coarse, but exceedingly humorous pictures of low life. The competitors have nearly all got their first chance, and the cavalcade has almost reached its

destination, when the curtain falls upon the unfinished plot.

In conjuring up and directing this wonderful pageant, Chaucer shows all the magic powers of his great genius. His invention never falters, but is always appropriate and striking. The tone of feeling, too, varies most exquisitely along with the circumstances which call it forth. At one place he is dignified and chivalrous; at another, he shakes with uproarious merriment. Sometimes his manner is dry and sarcastic; sometimes it is gentle and sweetly plaintive.

BARBOUR.—Although Chaucer had shewn with what splendid and varied effect the English tongue might be used, there were very few, **B. ab. 1316.** in a long course of years, who had even the **D. 1396.** ability to appreciate and imitate his style. During the first two centuries after his birth, the only persons who were worthy to be named in the same period with him, were a few Scottish poets. For though they *were* Scottish, their language was, in all its essential qualities, the same as Chaucer's. The first of these eminent Scots was John Barbour, Archdeacon of Aberdeen. The few facts of his life that are known to us, represent him in the character of a man of importance. In 1357 he was one of the Commissioners appointed to determine the ransom of David II. During the same year, he was employed to accompany three young students of rank to Oxford. A similar errand apparently afterwards took him to France. It is also found that, in his latter years, his literary services were rewarded with two pensions.

The only extant work of Barbour's is *The Bruce*, a poem in rhymed octosyllabic verse. In this production, his aim was to raise a monument more lasting than stone to King Robert, the great saviour of Scotland's freedom. Any recorded facts, and any floating traditions which he could find, he made the framework of his narrative. When these failed to make a complete picture, he filled up the gaps with incidents from his own imagination. The entire plan was executed with

a taste and judgment remarkable for the age. There are no monstrous legends and whimsical superstitions. Events are portrayed with minute, and very often with happy fidelity. The battle-pieces, especially, are dashed off with force, spirit, and vividness. In his bursts of feeling, he is always natural and high-toned, and never tedious and bombastic. Though a fervent lover of freedom, he never stoops to attack the enslavers of his country with scurrilous abuse. So life-like and so masterly, in fact, is the whole representation, that its author has been called "The Chaucer of Scotland."

JAMES I. OF SCOTLAND.—Next in order comes the Royal Poet, James I. of Scotland, son of Robert III. Like the rest of the Stuart line he led an ill-fated life. While still a mere boy, he was forced to flee for France, to escape the bloody hands of his usurping uncle Albany. On the voyage an English privateer seized him as a prize and carried him to London. During the next eighteen years the brightest part of his youth was wasted in dull confinement. Nor was he more fortunate after his restoration to his Crown. He strove in vain, for fourteen years, to introduce order and law into his turbulent kingdom; and just when he was beginning to see the fruits of his exertions, he was assassinated by his provoked subjects. Yet amid those dark and troubled days the soul of James had found time to catch and cherish the sweet images of poetry. Forgetting that he was a king, he had sat with the willing mind of a subject at the feet of old Chaucer. The result was, that he left behind him a poem, which has shed more lustre round his head than the crown of the Bruce which he wore. In the *King's Quair* (or *Book*), he describes with a sweet tenderness, and with an overflowing wealth of imagery and allegory, the charms of his future consort, Lady Joanna Beaufort; whom he first saw from the window of his prison, on a May morning, walking, "like the goddess of nature," in a "garden full of flowers," and adorned with "beauty enough to make a world to doat."

DUNBAR.—The greatest of these Scottish poets, however, and greater in fact than any Scottish poet before Burns, was William Dunbar, a native of Lothian. From the newly-founded university of St Andrews this man came forth, the most richly endowed Briton, perhaps, of that age. His intellect was at once powerful, agile, and dexterous. His imagination was capacious, and teemed with creations of every sort. He had a keen and vehement sense of the humorous. Within his breast there slept a deep well of passion, which the slightest circumstance could let loose in an overwhelming flood. At the same time, underneath all these, and visible in quiet moments, lay a strong reverence for the beautiful and the good. Yet Dunbar, like Burns, was one of those kingly spirits who have been condemned by fate to waste their noble energies in the discharge of degrading offices. For some years he wandered through Scotland, England, and France, in the garb of a begging friar, canting and flattering for his daily meals. Then, having donned the wallet of the Pardoner, he might have been descried, on some village green, auctioneering indulgences and wonder-working relics. His condition was scarcely improved when he became a courtier. A permanent benefice, for which he ardently longed, was denied him. For a paltry pension he wasted the rest of his life in a position not much above that of the king's jester, amusing the gay frequenters of the palace with his flashes of merriment, and humorous but gross verses.

Such a versatile nature, exposed to such a chequered course of circumstances, could not fail to give forth very varied productions. Accordingly, Dunbar's works are a collection of the most diverse kinds of poetry, written in the most diverse kinds of tone. In the *Golden Terge*, and *The Thistle and the Rose*, he discourses in dignified allegory. In his *Tidings fra the Session*, he talks in direct and every-day language. In the *Merle and Nightingale* he is pious. In the *Dance* he is indecent.

The minor poets of this period are—Gower, the author of the *Lover's Confession*; Lydgate, the author of the *Storie of Thebes*; Blind Harry, the author of *Wallace*; Henryson, the author of the *Testament of Cressida*; and Gawain Douglas, Bishop of Dunkeld, whose *Æneid* was the first translation of classic poetry into English verse.

PROSE WRITERS.

MANDEVILLE.—The first book ever written in English prose was a volume of travels by Sir John Mandeville. This worthy knight seems to have been a perfect specimen of a simple-minded enthusiast. His desire to see the world led him across the Channel in 1322, a time when few of his countrymen ventured to leave their own island. Groping his way among strange tribes, and amid the jargon of unknown tongues, he wandered eastward. Sometimes he trudged along on foot, disarming all hostility by his look of honest simplicity. Sometimes he was taken up into the train of a bright band of chivalrous knights who were riding for the Holy City. In this manner the wayfarer explored a great part of Europe, Asia, and Africa, opening wide his eyes for every object, and his ears for every sound. Brimful of a heterogeneous mass of information, he returned home about 1355, and sat down to communicate it to the literary world. In writing he shewed a restless anxiety lest the very smallest particle of his stores should be omitted. All the observations he had made with his own eyes regarding men and manners, and all the ridiculous fables he had gathered from superstitious duffers about human beings with tails, and birds carrying elephants through the sky, were recorded with the same imperturbable air of seriousness. And that all Christians might “undirstonde” these important revelations, he “put the book out of Latin into French, and translated it agen out of French into English.” Yet this credulous and unsuspecting knight is still valued as a master of a clear and correct style, and as the first author

who taught the English to express themselves in plain and direct prose.

WYCKLIFFE.—The only other notable prose writer of this period is Wyckcliffe, the Father of the **B. 1324.** Reformation. He was a native of Yorkshire, **D. 1384.** and for forty years held an eminent position at Oxford, first as a student, then as the master of a college, and latterly as a lecturer on Divinity. This reformer stands forth in this ignorant and rude age as an intellectual giant, animated into fervent energy by the grace of God. His strong mind could not lie at ease under the complicated net-work of chains which priest-craft had imposed upon Christendom. In a short time he was seen rising up, shaking off all restraint, and, single-handed, declaring himself the champion of the truth. His weapons were those polished shafts of celestial temper, forged by the Divine Spirit himself, and laid up in the sacred armoury of the Scriptures. The points which he attacked were the usurpation of the Pope, the many orders among the Hierarchy, the corruptions of the clergy, saint worship, transubstantiation, and indulgences. The object of his onset was, to secure for men the right of reading the Bible for themselves, and the liberty of forming and retaining their own religious opinions. In vain the clergy arraigned him before two convocations. Under the favour of John of Gaunt and other nobles who were hostile to the power of the priests, he set himself to prepare a more formidable kind of weapon. This was the translation of the Bible; and long after his palsied limbs had been laid in the grave, and long after his bones had been burned by priestly malice, it continued to spread dismay and rout among the hosts of the enemy.

Wyckcliffe's translation is worthy of peculiar reverence, since it was the first entire copy of the English Scriptures. It has also great merit as a specimen of the prose of the period. The spirit of the inspired original seems to have influenced the translator; and his version surpasses his many fugitive writings in the clearness and force of its diction.

THIRD PERIOD.

THE AGE OF THE REFORMATION.

1509-1558.

Characteristic:—An earnest practical spirit expressing itself in the plainest and most direct language.

New Agencies—Revival of Classical Learning—The Reformation—The Art of Printing—Effect of these Agencies on Literature.

PROSE WRITERS:—More—Latimer—Fox—Ascham—Other Writers.

POETS:—Surrey—Other Poets.

SCOTTISH WRITERS:—Knox—Buchanan.

IN this period, society was stirred to its very heart by two of the mightiest agencies in modern history, namely, the Revival of Classical Learning and the Reformation.

During the fifteenth century the great master-pieces of Grecian literature had been disinterred from the dust of ages. The language, which was the key to this great treasury of genius, had been eagerly prosecuted by continental scholars. Grocyn had introduced the study of it into England; and the great Erasmus, during his visit, had recommended it to some of the choice spirits of the age. So important had it now come to be considered, that William Lilly began to teach it publicly in the newly-founded school of St Paul's; and every one who strove to win a learned reputation studied it with assiduity.

A still stronger movement was the Reformation, which began during this age to convulse the mind of Christendom. The teaching of Wyckliffe had prepared the English for imbibing the spirit of freedom that was wafted over from the land of Luther. Accordingly, no sooner had the secession of Henry VIII. from the See of Rome afforded an opportunity for reform, than many

bold spirits made an onset against the old religion. A severe contest ensued, in which all the powers and resources of the national intellect were brought into vigorous play.

Yet both these agencies would have been comparatively ineffective had they not found an instrument, simple in its nature, but powerful and far-reaching in its influence. This was the newly-invented Art of Printing, which had been introduced into England by William Caxton about 1474. By means of it, books were thrown off much more rapidly, and consequently, at much less expense. The result was, that the ancient classics, religious treatises, and, above all, the Bible, were placed within the reach of a far wider circle of readers.

Those two agencies wielding such a weapon could not fail to have a very favourable effect upon the literature of the country. Scholars found themselves in the position of those who have been roused from the grotesqueness and confusion of a dream, and are opening their eyes upon the order and beauty of the real world. Some of them were entranced with a passion for learning hitherto unfelt, and attained a consummation of taste and art in classical literature never known before. Sir Thomas More, for example, composed excellent Greek epigrams; and Buchanan rivalled Livy and Virgil in writing their own language. At the same time, an earnest practical spirit began to animate authors. The readers to whom they addressed themselves were men of all classes. The subjects on which they generally wrote were those that concerned the dearest interests of mankind. Their diction was plain and direct, adapted for entering the narrowest understanding; their tone was artless and fervent, well-fitted to stir the very depths of the heart.

PROSE WRITERS.

MORE.—One of the best and most happily constituted minds of the sixteenth century was that of Sir Thomas More. At the early age of seventeen, he appeared to Erasmus "more

B. 1480.
D. 1535.

gentle, more pleasing, more gifted," than any whom that far-travelled scholar had seen. All the proud honours which the fickle tyrant, Henry VIII., lavished upon him could not affect the simplicity of his nature. As a Privy Councillor, in the Speaker's Chair, with the Great Seal in his hand, he was the same genial and imperturbable philosopher. He still continued, within his rural retreat at Chelsea, to banter his shrewish wife and instruct his family. Even when the royal arm would wind itself affectionately round his neck, he was quietly keeping in mind that on the slightest provocation, the royal mandate would go forth to sever that neck in twain. Accordingly, when the day of trial came, he was prepared. Rather than signify his approval of the marriage between Henry VIII. and Anne Boleyn, he preferred to be charged with the crime of high treason. Though he was a Catholic, his sincere piety bore him up till the very last; and in his usual cheerful and joking mood, he laid down his head upon the fatal block on Tower Hill.

The most famous work of More's is the *Utopia*, written in Latin, and afterwards translated into English by Bishop Burnet. It is a description of the laws and customs of an imaginary island on the coast of America. His supposed motives for writing this work were peculiar. In his inmost soul he cherished certain liberal opinions (such as an approval of religious toleration), which were far too startling for the age, and which, if avowed, might have cost him his head. These opinions he wished to express in a form which might represent them to some persons as beautiful ideas rather than earnest sentiments. Accordingly, he set a true picture of what society ought to be, in a massive and fantastic framework of fiction. Another excellent production of More's is *The History of Richard III.*, a work which holds an important place in the history of English literature, as the first specimen of classical English prose. The facts are well-chosen, well-arranged, and strikingly represented. The style is like a summer stream—natural, transparent, sweetly-flowing, and relieved at intervals by sparkling breaks of

happy thoughts and fancies. Not less remarkable are his *Letters*, addressed to his private friends and the members of his family. In these we see the genuine outcome of the man who, in the bosom of his domestic circle, was even-tempered, genial, pious, and radiant with wit and wisdom.

LATIMER.—The writers of that age were all racy, but the raciest of them all was Hugh Latimer, a native of Leicestershire, who studied at Cambridge, and was afterwards made Bishop of Worcester. This burly divine was a rare example of a hearty out-spoken Englishman. While a Bachelor of Divinity, he loudly declaimed against the “impious innovations” of Melancthon. Yet no sooner had the truth of the Reformed Religion been presented to his mind, than he became a bolder innovator than Melancthon himself. Neither the threatening aspect of the popish persecutors, nor the many favours of Henry VIII., could stop his mouth. He remonstrated with the king upon forbidding the use of the Scriptures; and he even sent him, as a birth-day present, a Bible marked at the passage,—“Whoremongers and adulterers God shall judge.” And when the day of suffering came, his courage did not falter. Shrinking from the famous Six Articles, the creed which Henry thrust upon the Church, he abandoned his bishopric; and, in the reign of Bloody Mary, he died at the stake, rejoicing that, with his poor burning body he was “lighting a fire in England which would never be put out.”

The only production of Latimer that has come down to us, is a collection of *Sermons*. In these, as in his conduct, he was blunt and abrupt. The subjects which he chose were generally those which bore upon the every-day duties of life. In his treatment, there was an utter ignoring of all taste and propriety. His only care was to make his ideas as palpable as possible. The meanest objects and the most ignoble employments were used to represent the sublime doctrines and calling of religion. He sometimes went so far as to illustrate his

meaning by long anecdotes about himself and others; and, all the while, his language was the dialect of the road-side and the market-place, and sometimes even the slang of the tavern. Yet in his whole demeanour there was an absorbing earnestness which sanctified his eccentricity, and commended it to the very hearts of his hearers.

Fox.—Of all the works produced during this period, the most popular in the present day is John Fox's *Book of Martyrs*. The author himself passed through a series of that very kind of sufferings which his work commemorates. For his early avowal of Protestantism, his college at Oxford expelled him, and his friends disowned him. Not long afterwards, he was saved from starvation in London by some unknown person. Scarcely had he been comfortably settled as tutor in the family of a Duchess, when the accession of Bloody Mary compelled him to flee for his life to the Continent. There he earned his bread as a printer's reader until the establishment of Protestantism opened up a way for his return.

Fox's writings, like his conduct, is characterised by zeal and honesty. It is true that the intensely controversial spirit of the times very often tempts him to exaggerate the merits of his own party, and to abuse and underrate his opponents, but whenever he has a well-known fact to record, or a document to quote, he is scrupulously exact.

ASCHAM.—Roger Ascham, one of the most learned men of his time, was a native of Yorkshire, and a Fellow of Cambridge. During the greater part of his life his days were past among his favourite Greek authors. If he *did* leave his study, it was only to take a shot at the bow-butts, or to see a cock-fight. Yet, in the latter half of his career, he appeared in public as preeminently the scholar of the court. Edward VI., Mary, and Elizabeth, in succession, made him their Latin Secretary. To Elizabeth he acted also as classical tutor. His death, in

fact, was hastened by the labour he bestowed on a Latin poem, which he intended to present to his queenly pupil on New-Year's-Day.

The mind of Ascham was strong and healthy. His opinions were not those of a mere recluse, but of a sagacious observer of the world. In his *Toxophilus*, a treatise on Archery, he proves most conclusively that the exercise of the body gives soundness and elasticity to the mind; and in his *Schoolmaster* he advances views on education which the educators of the present day have only begun to recognise as true. Nor was his heart less sound than his head. His design, in all his works, was not so much to erect a monument of his learning and skill as to enlighten his fellow-countrymen. Accordingly, laying aside Latin, the language of the learned, he strove to express himself in plain, straight-forward, idiomatic English.

The other prose writers of any note are few. Yet among them are,—William Caxton, the first English printer; John Fischer, the fellow-martyr of Sir Thomas More; and William Tynedale and Miles Coverdale, the translators of the Holy Scriptures.

POETS.

SURREY.—The age of the Reformation was not favourable to the development of poetry. The social and religious wants of the time were too urgent to permit a man to *sing* his sentiments. Most authors felt themselves compelled to express their thoughts in the most practical prose. The few poets that did appear had not thrown themselves into the tide of public feeling, but stood apart, and drew their inspiration from another source than the spirit of the time. The most notable of these was Henry Howard Earl of Surrey, eldest son of the Duke of Norfolk. All that is known of his life consists of a few glimpses that are caught of him amid the shifting scenes of the troubled reign of Henry VIII. At one time he appears an innocent boy, bearing the king's cup. At another time, he is seen a handsome high-

spirited young courtier receiving the knighthood of the Garter from the royal hand. Here, we behold him borne, wounded and drooping, from the siege of Montreuil. There, we see him at the head of an English force, retreating before the French towards Boulogne. The last scene of all is the most touching. On Tower Hill, beside the fatal block, he stands, in the full flush of his manhood, condemned to slake with his life-blood the thirst of the old tyrant whom he had served.

Surrey chiefly claims our notice as a reformer of English verse. From his favourite Italian poets he caught a manner and a style hitherto unknown in English Literature. He was the first to introduce the Sonnet, that compact and exquisite weapon which our great bards afterwards took up. He also imported blank verse, the form which Shakespere and Milton found most suitable for their most sublime thoughts and imaginings. But along with these real reforms he brought into use a sickly style. His verses generally run upon love. They are all addressed to the same lady, and are all pitched in the same plaintive key. Poem after poem describes almost the same kind of sentimental feeling, and is adorned with almost the same kind of frigid conceits. So much, indeed, does he harp upon one string, that in the end his readers are as sick of him as he is sick of love.

The other notable poets of this age were—Sir Thomas Wyatt, the friend of Surrey; Thomas Sackville, the designer, and one of the contributors, of a collection of poems called *A Mirror for Magistrates*; John Skelton, the trenchant author of the satire entitled *Colin Clout*; and Nicholas Udall, the author of *Ralph Roister Doister*, the oldest English comedy.

SCOTTISH WRITERS.

There is a greater difference between the literature of Scotland and the literature of England during this period than during any other of our nine periods. Scottish writers were so engrossed with the violent struggle of the Reformation that they had no time to

study English authors. Whatever of the vernacular they did write they wrote in the dialect of their particular native province. It has therefore been found necessary to make, in this chapter, a distinction between the writers of the two countries, which will not be found in any other part of the book.

KNOX.—The influence of John Knox, even although he was a great author, is more indirect than direct upon literature. This extraordinary man may be likened to a strong and rugged instrument fashioned by Providence for the crushing of superstition. No sooner had he imbibed the reformed opinions than he became the relentless foe of Popery. Living as an outlaw for twelve years, he still continued, by his letters and treatises, to strengthen the courage of his own party at home. And on his return, in 1559, he was the inspiring genius of the Reformation. "The voice of that one man," said the English ambassador, "is able in an hour to put more life in us than 600 trumpets continually blustering in our ears." Under the effect of his fiery eloquence the Protestants rallied round their leaders; the monasteries and images were pulled down; and Presbyterian Protestantism was established throughout the land. Even Queen Mary was taught that her conduct could not be exempt from the criticism of the stern preacher of St Giles'. "What have you to do with my marriage," said she; "or what are you in this commonwealth?" "A subject, born within the same, Madam;" replied he. At length, after he had stamped his image indelibly upon the national character, he was laid in the grave with this eulogy from the Regent Morton,—"There lies he who never feared the face of clay."

Knox was, in some respects, well qualified to write the history of that severe conflict in which he was engaged. As the leader of one of the armies, he occupied a position from which he could survey the whole field. There it was his engrossing task to watch every change and emergency of the raging struggle. It is true that he might overlook or misunderstand some of the smaller

actions. But the great critical movements could not fail to be seen with vivid distinctness by such an entranced spectator. Accordingly, Knox's *History of the Reformation* presents to us, on the whole, a true vision of what really happened. The great events rise up before us in such rough and life-like forms, that we feel ourselves breathing the atmosphere of that troublous age.

BUCHANAN.—Another great reformer, and one of the greatest boasts of Scotland, was George Buchanan, a graduate of St Andrews. Though his works in the vernacular are comparatively insignificant, yet his genius was such an honour to his country, that his name cannot be omitted in a history of our native literature. This persecuted scholar led a life of almost ceaseless change. At three different times he was a professor in no less than three different French colleges. A similar office was also held by him in Portugal. Ultimately returning to Scotland, he became classical tutor to Queen Mary, and Principal of St Leonard's College, St Andrews. One of the last tasks of his life was the education of the young King James, a duty performed with a thoroughness which descended sometimes to the application of the rod to the royal person.

Buchanan was one of the most exquisite classical scholars that have ever appeared in Christendom. Latin was as familiar to him as his native tongue. The purity, the elegance, the dignity of the great masters of the Augustan Age were all his own. It did not matter what he wrote. His *History of Scotland* is clear and vigorous; his *Treatise on the Constitution of the Kingdom* is bold, conclusive, and far-reaching in its arguments; his ode, entitled "*Calendæ Maiæ*," is worthy of Horace; while his poetical translation of the Psalms of David catches the tenderness, fervour, and sublimity of the divine original, better than any other version in existence.

Another Scotsman, named Arthur Johnston, wrote a Latin version of the Psalms, which, in elegance and correctness, does not fall far short of Buchanan's.

FOURTH PERIOD.

THE AGE OF SHAKESPEARE AND MILTON.

1558-1660.

Characteristics:—A wealth of thought—often verging upon profusion, and a splendour of diction—often degenerating into floridity.

Extent of the Period—Social Peace and Contentment—Men of Letters placed between a Past Age of Chivalry and a New Age of Enlightenment—the Greatest Literary Period.

DRAMATISTS:—*Marlowe—Shakespeare—Jonson—Beaumont & Fletcher—Massinger—Other Dramatists.*

POETS:—*Spenser—Herrick—Cowley—Milton—Other Poets.*

PROSE WRITERS:—*Sydney—Hooker—Bacon—Raleigh—Hobbes—Taylor—Baaxter—Fuller—Other Writers.*

THE Elizabethan age of literature (as this period is generally called) extends over a much greater space of time than the Elizabethan age of politics. The reason is obvious. The literary impulse which arose in the latter half of the time of that queen did not end with her reign. So mighty was it, that it continued in spite of the civil troubles of the reigns of James, Charles, and Cromwell, down to the time of the Restoration. It animated such men as Milton and Taylor, and elevated them far above the influence of the degenerate tastes of their age.

During the reign of the Virgin Queen, England entered upon a new era in her history. Abroad, the news of the defeat of the Armada had overawed her enemies. At home, Protestantism had been established, and there was no longer any burning or slaughter in the name of religion. It is true, that Nonconformists were still punished by fines and mutilation; yet, even among the most diverse sects, there was a spirit of loyalty which

triumphed over all persecution. Many a sincere Catholic girded on his sword to defend the great patroness of Protestantism against her Spanish foes; and it is related, that a certain Puritan, after one of his hands had been chopped off for nonconformity, waved the other in the air, crying—"God save the Queen." On the whole, the people were contented with the government, and began to follow their own inclinations. Nor did they, in this pursuit, relapse into sordid inactivity. The blessed rays of truth which were now falling upon the land had warmed every human energy into healthy action. Some betook themselves to the peaceful arts, and increased their social comforts. Others, of a more daring spirit, scoured the Atlantic billows, and brought home the choice luxuries of distant climes. At the same time, not a few were zealously spreading the elevating influences of knowledge. Books of travel and adventure were placed in the hands of the curious; the classics were translated for those scholars who knew not the learned tongues; and every week the Word of Life, pure from its sacred source, was read in the hearing of the meanest peasant. It is no wonder that the people of England long cherished a fond recollection of the days of the "Good Queen Bess."

The authors of this transition-period may be likened to a company of travellers who, in their ascent from a narrow glen, have reached the summit of a spacious table-land. Behind them lay the gloomy valley of feudalism, with its frowning castles, its embattled armies, its jousts of chivalry, and its haunted forests, looming through the mist. Before them stretched the breezy upland of modern civilisation, illumined by the rising sun of Truth, adorned with fruitful farms and busy towns, and skirted by unexplored fields of many a league in length. Some of them, like Spenser, fondly lingered over the romantic scenes which they had passed. Others, like Bacon, eagerly scanned the new prospect which had burst upon their gaze. And a few, like Shakespere, taking in both regions with one wide sweep of the eye, calmly viewed the one in the light of the other. At the same time, although they

were all looking in different directions, they all felt an inspiration arising from their commanding position. Great thoughts and images crowded into their minds and filled their mouths with lofty and metaphorical language. So overwhelming was the throng that they had not time to select and arrange. Their creations were handed down to posterity, colossal, rugged, and unsymmetrical, like the unpremeditated visions of a prophet.

These advantages, acting upon the great natural genius of the writers, made this age the greatest literary epoch in the world's history. Never before, not even in the golden ages of ancient Greece and Rome, and of modern Italy and France, was seen such a family of intellectual giants. All the authors whom England reveres as demigods, and has set apart as altogether unapproachable, were crowded within this small space of time. It is still to this period, as to a rich foreign clime, that writers repair for grand thoughts, rich imagery, and sweet versification.

DRAMATISTS.

For several centuries the Drama had been slowly passing through several rude phases towards a perfect form. The first kind was the Miracle Plays, which conjured up the saints to speak for the edification of the pious. Next came the Moralities or Moral Plays, crowded with personifications of virtues and vices, who, with rant and fustian in their mouths, split the ears of the audience. To these succeeded the Interludes, a conglomeration of the two preceding forms. It was not till after the middle of the sixteenth century that circumstances began to be favourable for the full development of the Drama. Stimulated by the study of foreign writers, the Dramatists began to aim at a higher ideal. Their skill was appreciated by the pageant-loving Court of Elizabeth, and the theatres became the nightly resort of the fashionable world. The pockets of the managers were filled, and they were enabled to offer the highest remuneration for literary aid. The result was, that scholars from the universities, and men

of original genius, enrolled themselves in the service of the playhouse ; and the Drama stood forth, adorned with the choicest wit and the most splendid imagery of the age.

MARLOWE.—The greatest of Shakespere's predecessors was Christopher or, as he was familiarly called, Kit Marlowe, a native of Canterbury, and a graduate of Cambridge. If we may believe the few vague notices of his career that have come down to us, he led the life of a votary of pleasure. His flashing wit and his social qualities made him a great favourite among carousing play-writers. He became the boon companion of the infamous Greene and the foul-mouthed Nash, and gave the rein to all his wild passions. To allay the torments of conscience, he stifled his religious feelings, and in his mad hours of revelry, declared himself an atheist. He was still wallowing in his vices when retribution overtook him. Gambling in a low house at Deptford, he was slain by his companion, Francis Archer, who is said to have been a serving-man.

The principal plays of Marlowe are the tragedies entitled *Tamburlaine*, *The Jew of Malta*, *Edward the Second*, and *Faustus*. All these give evidence of a mind extraordinarily powerful, but not matured. There is a general want of life-like variety. Most of the plots abound in scenes of blood and slaughter. The great majority of the characters are mere outlines, lacking completeness and individuality. There is generally only one engrossing personage in a play, and even he is rendered peculiar by an almost utter want of all the ordinary human sympathies. For example, *Tamburlaine* is a successful braggart, constantly blustering a self-laudation, which would appear arrogant even in the mouth of Jupiter Tonans himself ; and the *Jew of Malta* is a grinning fiend, who, out of sheer malice, plots the destruction of every Christian with whom he meets, poisons his own daughter, and winds up a course of wholesale butchery by inviting an army of friendly soldiers to a banquet, and blowing them into the air with gun-

powder. Yet, in the midst of this absurdity, these dramas have qualities of wonderful excellence. The blank verse is easy and pliant, at one time sweet and tender, at another time sonorous and dignified. There are passages, too, which breathe the deepest spirit of tragedy. Shakespere himself has never surpassed the intense and heart-breaking pathos of the last scene of *Edward the Second*. And no picture could be fuller of agonising horror and suspense than *Faustus* in his study at midnight, expecting every moment to be seized and carried to hell by Satan, calling upon all the powers of inanimate nature to annihilate him, yet unable to utter a single word of prayer to God.

Marlowe also translated, in the most exquisite manner, a great part of *Hero and Leander*.

SHAKESPERE.—The author, however, who raised the drama to the very summit of perfection, and
 B. 1564. imbued it with a splendour which outshone
 D. 1616. the excellence of every other species of composition, was William Shakespere. Around the history of this extraordinary man a cloud of obscurity hangs. Yet from the few vague facts that we do know, it appears that his great genius was fostered among the most common-place circumstances. His birth-place was Stratford-on-Avon, an inconsiderable market-town among the pastures of Warwickshire. His father was the owner, and probably the cultivator, of a small property. The only seminary which he attended was the Free Grammar School of his native town. So humble was his destiny considered, that he was set, at an early age, to assist his father. So unambitious was he himself, that, at eighteen, he married Ann Hathaway, a simple rustic maiden of the neighbouring village of Shottery. There is even a legend to the effect that he was idle enough to become a deer-stealer, and that he was forced to flee to London in disgrace.

After Shakespere had come to London, about 1586, a bright path of prosperity opened up before him. A poor friendless youth though he was, his genius had a magic power over his destinies. His many-sided judg-

ment made him master of every position. His large healthy nature, genial and all-embracing as the sunshine, won him every heart. Naturally and speedily he rose from the condition of an obscure underling to the post of a shareholder and manager of the Blackfriars' Theatre. And in this position his faculties came into fuller play than ever. Not content with producing the works of others on the stage, he began to astonish the world with plays of his own. In every kind of the drama he wrote; and in every kind he carried by storm the applause of the theatre. His comedies, so ingenious, so poetical, so sprightly, so brimful of wild wit and humour, excited the laughter of the dullest groundling. His histories, so high-sounding with the pride, pomp, and circumstance of chivalry, stirred, as with the music of battle, the old martial spirit of the people. His tragedies, full as they were of a deep sentiment, which it required ages thoroughly to appreciate, conveyed an impression of undefinable beauty and grandeur. As the bright procession of dramas continued to appear, each one surpassing its predecessor in steady splendour, the age was spell-bound with wonder. All his rivals were out-dazzled and confounded. The fashion of the land, including royalty itself, smiled benignantly upon him. Honoured and rich he retired, at middle-age, to continue his great series of works amid the quietness of his native town. His last dramas were his best; and he died, in the full prime of his genius, at the age of fifty-two.

It is scarcely possible to characterise the literary excellence of Shakespere. We cannot say of him, as we might say of any other author, that a certain one of his faculties towers above all the others. *All* his faculties are gigantic, and they are all *equally* gigantic. Searching discrimination of character, potent imagination, comprehensive judgment, profound meditation, ever-active sympathy, and a strong sense of the ludicrous, all act harmoniously together. The result is, that throughout his works there is a sustained power of description, and a harmonious blending of every possible excellence. The plots move onward with all the

ease, dignity, and effect of real life. The characters appear, a large and motley throng, containing specimens from almost every class of men. At the same time, the stream of feeling is ever full and natural, changing most exquisitely with every change of circumstance. It would be possible to find in the pages of the great dramatist an expression for almost every sentiment of the human heart.

The mind of Shakespere, in fact, may be likened to a spacious highland lake, which all the influences of earth and air have combined to render peaceful and pellucid. Calmly and clearly it reflects within its bosom the forms of the overhanging universe, the ever-changing splendours of the firmament, the variegated landscape of rock and wood and mountain, and the crowds of faces that are conveyed across its waters in the pursuit of pleasure or of business. Even the weird hags that celebrate their orgies on its lonely shores, and the moon-lit fairies that trip along its surface, shed down their strange figures into this wonderful mirror. So distinct and vivid is the entire representation, that as we gaze upon it, we cannot say in what respect it differs from the real tangible world around us.

Of plays so numerous, so great, and so various, it is difficult to say which are the best. Among his histories, *Henry IV.*, *Richard III.*, and *Henry VIII.*, are most popular. Of his comedies, the highest places have generally been assigned to *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *The Merchant of Venice*, and *As You Like It*. And amid his tragedies none are more wonderful than *The Tempest*, *Hamlet*, *Othello*, *Lear*, and *Macbeth*.

JONSON.—The early part of Ben Jonson's life was full of adventure. His step-father made him a bricklayer; but he threw down his trowel and enlisted. Serving in the Netherlands, he engaged a man in single combat and despatched him in sight of the two armies. On his return to London, a new exploit awaited him. It was not long before he was lying in prison, charged with killing a fellow-actor in a duel in Hogsden Fields. But Ben had a mind

above that of a mere brawler. His perusal of the comedies of Plautus and Terence, led him to think of imitating the styles of these writers in his plays. Instead of making his comic dramas little else than poetical romances, as Shakespere did, he made them representations of national manners. This new mode hit the public taste, and the author began to be a man of mark. King James pensioned him, and employed him to prepare masques for the Court. His portly presence became "the wonder of Fleet Street;" he was not thought unworthy to engage with Shakespere in those famous wit-combats at the "Mermaid;" and when he died he was laid in Westminster Abbey, with the inscription,—“O rare Ben Jonson.”

Ben Jonson was a sagacious and skilful workman in the field of the drama. His knowledge of his art was consummate. His command over materials, whether drawn directly from real life or selected from the stores of Greek and Roman learning, was masterly. There were, therefore, a completeness and propriety about every thing he wrote. His classical tragedies, *Sejanus* and *Catiline*, were correct impersonations of the dignity and eloquence of antiquity. His comedies were faithful pictures of ordinary life, finished with just such a dash of caricature as would attract the interest of play-goers. But the most wonderful perhaps of all his works, are his pastorals, masques, and lyrics. In them we see a graceful fancy and a musical flow which we would not have expected from such a solid mind.

BEAUMONT AND FLETCHER.—Beaumont was a native of Leicestershire; and Fletcher was a native of Sussex. They met in London, and formed a literary partnership, or rather, a literary wedlock. The same lodging, the same board, and even the same clothing, it is said, sufficed them. Yoked together, their two minds produced several dramas, and death alone cut the tie asunder.

The dramas of these two writers were well-suited to please the popular taste. The plans were laid with

great effect. The scenes were alive with change and interest. The dialogue ran on lightly and briskly. There was enough of poetry and passion to keep the feelings in a pleasing excitement; and there was not enough of deep thought to tax the mind severely. On the other hand, it must be confessed, that they gratified the public by less legitimate means. No other plays of the time lack to such an extent the sense of decency and modesty.

MASSINGER.—A stern fate was that of Philip Massinger. After he had left Oxford and come to London, he entered into a thick cloud of obscurity. That he had a hard struggle to earn his bread, is proved by the multitude of dramas which he threw off. That he wasted his life under cold neglect, is shown by two incidental notices which have come down to us. The one is a letter, written conjointly by him and two fellow-dramatists, imploring a theatrical manager to lend them £5 to bail them out of prison. The other is a note in a London parish register, stating that, in March 1640, there was buried "Philip Massinger, a stranger."

Massinger seems to have formed his style on the two very different manners of Shakespere and Jonson. His plots are solidly laid; and his language breathes with the grace and beauty of poetry. If his characters do not stand out in bold relief; their chief features are powerfully depicted. If he does not sound the depths of tragic woe, he gives eloquent expression to the passions of every-day existence. Nay, in describing the emotions of dignified self-esteem, he rises to the very height of his art. So substantial, indeed, are his merits, that his *New Way to Pay Old Debts* is still acted, and some critics have arisen who give him the place among dramatists that is next to Shakespere.

The giant bulk of these writers dwarfed many of their brethren who were really great. In any other period such men as Greene, Chapman, Webster, Middleton, Marston, Ford, Dekker, and Shirley, would have been considered eminent dramatists.

POETS.

SPENSER.—No author was better appreciated in this age than Edmund Spenser, a native of London, **B. 1553.** and a student of Cambridge. It was not long **D. 1599.** before his genius gained for him the friendship of Sir Philip Sidney. Sidney introduced him to the generous patronage of the Court of Elizabeth. He was pensioned, and, in course of time, appointed Secretary to the Lord-Deputy of Ireland. A grant of 3000 acres in the county Cork then followed; and, at his own romantic castle of Kilcolman, he passed twelve years, framing the wondrous visions of his *Fairy Queen*. A dark cloud, however, fell upon the latter days of Spenser. In 1598 the Irish Rebellion extended to his neighbourhood. The mob set fire to his castle; and, so hotly was his own life pursued, that he was compelled to leave his infant child to perish among the blazing ruins. Poverty-stricken and broken-hearted, he reached London, only to lay himself down upon his death-bed.

The *Fairy Queen* is "a continued allegory or dark conceit," written in a stanza which consists of nine lines, and which is closed by an Alexandrine. The plan is negligently grand. Magnanimity, personified into Prince Arthur, sets out to seek Glory, who is represented in the character of the Fairy Queen. When he arrives, that princess is celebrating her annual feast. On each day, a Virtue, in the form of a chivalrous knight, is sent forth to redress wrongs. They undergo many perils, and are frequently saved by the timely interference of Prince Arthur. It was originally designed that the narrative should extend to twelve books, but six only have come down to us.

This wonderful moral lesson is literally buried under a heap of illustrations. The age of chivalry, with all its dreadful splendour, is summoned up to prolong the allegory. There are gloomy forests, and doleful caves, and enchanted palaces. We see gentle knights "pricking on the plain," distressed damsels making the woods ring with their cries, giants stalking with oaks

in their hands instead of staves, and dragons flapping their sail-like wings and appalling the very clouds of heaven. The heroes and heroines are involved in the most extraordinary adventures, engage in combats at the most desperate odds, and are in continual jeopardy of being utterly annihilated. If there is any fault, it is the fault of a redundant imagination. The whole poem, in fact, is full of the gorgeous extravagance of a dream. There are trees and animals from the most diverse climes, all crowded together in one scene. Grim heathen gods, from the darkness of antiquity, meet and converse with Christian knights. Some of the characters even change their identity. For example, Gloriana, Belpheobe, and Britomart, are all intended to represent Queen Elizabeth, while, at the same time, they are personified virtues.

The *Fairy Queen* may be likened to a palace full of echoing corridors, which lead into suite after suite of halls, blazing with all the splendour of "barbaric pearl and gold." On one who merely pays it a flying visit, the effect is unsatisfactory. As he hurries from room to room, he is dazzled and bewildered, and leaves with an impression blurred and confused. Far different, however, is the result on the rapt devotee who for a time makes the mansion his abode. Day after day he lingers with clear-eyed enthusiasm over the glories of each apartment. Day after day he continues to see a magnificent order and beauty rise out of the gorgeous chaos, until the palace presents itself to his mind one grand and harmonious whole, completely filling the imagination.

HERRICK.—Robert Herrick, one of those clergymen who were thrown out of their livings by the
 B. 1591. commotions of the Civil War, was of an easy
 D. ab. 1671. and happy disposition. Whether he was vegetating in his rustic parish of Dean Prior, or carousing with his literary brethren at Westminster, he was equally at home. The primitive sports of the country, the flowers of the garden, the memory of Ben Jonson's tavern sallies, female beauty, and religious thoughts—

all alike unlocked the flow of his poetry. His thoughts gushed forth in the most delicious trills—limpid, melodious, and sparkling with graceful fancies and tender feelings. His lyrics are now recognised as among the most exquisite of the period.

COWLEY.—Abraham Cowley, the posthumous son of a London grocer, was a martyr for the royalist cause. While he was still a student at Cambridge, the avowal of his opinions led to his expulsion from the university. He followed the family of the King into France, sitting up whole days and nights to decipher their correspondence. The Restoration came, but it did not effect any material change in his prospects. The rewards which he should have received were seized by more clamorous applicants. He was glad to content himself with a lease of some lands belonging to the Queen, near Chertsey. There he lived, disappointed in all his rural projects, till a cold, caught in his meadows, cut him off at the age of forty-nine.

The works of Cowley consist of *Davideis*, *Love Verses*, *Pindaric Odes*, and *Miscellanies* in prose and verse. His prose style is singularly easy, simple, and regular. Many of his smaller poems, especially those called *Anacreontics* and *The Chronicle*, are sprightly and sparkling. Others, though they are deformed with laboured analogies and fantastic conceits, contain much genuine feeling and many happy thoughts. It is the custom of the present day to neglect these works; yet in them a reader of susceptibility may often find a fresh store of poetical images.

MILTON.—All the influences of the age were employed in developing the mighty genius of John Milton. At Cambridge, his powers were trained by a severe course of midnight-study. Retiring from college to the privacy of his father's mansion at Horton, he abandoned himself to the study of literature, both ancient and modern. Then he travelled on the Continent, storing his capacious memory with

forms drawn from all that was beautiful and magnificent both in nature and in art. It came to pass, therefore, that during the civil war which followed his return to England, Milton occupied a lofty position. "His soul was like a star, and dwelt apart." Amid the war-clouds and dusty turmoil of the strife, it shed down a full and serene light upon the Puritan combatants. And, while his intelligence guided and cheered his own party, his voice broke like a peal of thunder over the ranks of the adversaries. Great was his triumph when, in the presence of an attentive Europe, he justified the execution of Charles I., and maintained his *Defence of the People of England* against Salmasius of Leyden. So weighty and resistless were his arguments that they are said to have fairly broken the heart of his opponent. Mightier than all these achievements, however, was the great work of Milton's declining years. The veteran poet, blind in his physical sight, yet clear in his inward vision; poor in material goods, yet overflowing with the priceless opulence of mind and heart; neglected and menaced by the grovelling world around him, yet confidently appealing to the judgment of posterity, sat down to write a *Paradise Lost* worthy to take a place among the very greatest triumphs of poetic art.

L'Allegro, Il Penseroso, the Hymn on the Nativity, Comus, Paradise Regained, and Samson Agonistes, are among the very grandest poems in the English language. But blending all their excellencies in one sublime whole, the *Paradise Lost* throws them all into the shade. Its subject is the mightiest that ever human pen essayed. It records a revolt in the very Court of Heaven, the Creation of a World, and the Fall of the Human Race. The scene opens upon Satan and "his horrid crew," "rolling in the fiery-gulf, confounded though immortal." Recovering from the shock, they assemble on the "burning marle," to study how they may best gratify their revenge against Jehovah. After several daring plans have been proposed, they at last resolve to seduce God's newly-created creature, Man, to their own party; and Satan himself sets out on

the expedition. As he "wings his way" to earth, the Lord observes him, and sends Raphael to fortify Adam against the assault. Raphael details to our first parent how the Angels fell, and how the world was made; but all is in vain. The wiles of Satan prevail; man transgresses; and Sin and Death take up their abode on the Earth.

The execution of the *Paradise Lost* is worthy of the plan. The potent imagination of the poet crowds every scene with forms of supernal grandeur. His luxuriant fancy robes them with spoils from all the fields of creation and art. There is no limit to the garniture which he lavishes on the poem. Classical images, sacred texts, facts from science and philosophy are all harmoniously inwoven in one rich and variegated piece of workmanship. Were not the framework so massive and gigantic, one might say that the ornamentation was profuse even to floridity.

Spenser and Milton had many worthy contemporaries. Among these, Michael Drayton and John Denham excelled as descriptive poets; Robert Southwell, Francis Quarles, and "Holy George Herbert," as didactic poets; Drummond of Hawthornden as a writer of *Sonnets*; and Donne and Hall as satirists.

PROSE WRITERS.

SIDNEY.—Chivalry reached its ideal beauty in Sir

Philip Sidney. His handsome person was instinct with all the high-bred graces; and his nature breathed with every generous and refined sentiment. Both abroad and at home he was the cynosure of every eye. Learned men dedicated their works to him. He was one of those who were nominated for the crown of Poland. Elizabeth herself cherished him as "the jewel of her time;" and when he died, from the effects of a wound received at Zutphen, the nation followed him, mourning, to his resting-place in St Paul's.

The writings of Sidney are not so admirable as his character. His *Defence of Poetry*, though written with

a complete abandonment to the subject, is deficient in critical grasp and apprehension. Of the same cast is his heroic romance called *Arcadia*. There is no palpable and compactly-formed plan. The reader very soon loses himself in an endless jungle of useless and dull details. If it were not for the passages of sweet and fresh poetry which appear at intervals, like green and fruitful oases, the book would resemble a savage and uninhabitable wilderness.

HOOKE. — At the time when the youthful Sidney was entering upon his brilliant career, there
 B. 1553. was, in a village school in Devonshire, a poor
 D. 1600. boy named Richard Hooker, who was destined to become one of the most simple-minded scholars on record. The avidity with which the modest lad drank in all kinds of knowledge was so great as to attract notice. Sent to Oxford, with the aid of Jewel, Bishop of Salisbury, he speedily mastered all the languages that came in his way. The different country cures in which he was placed, did not distract him from his studies. He was even proof against the outrageous tyranny of a shrew, whom, in his simplicity, he had been tempted to marry. Two of his pupils happening to pay him a visit, found the hen-pecked parson poring over Horace in the midst of a flock of sheep, which his wife had sent him to herd. At length, all his time and all his powers became engrossed with his great work on *Ecclesiastical Polity*. In search of arguments he ransacked all the domains of learning, and sounded all the depths of his own experience. He had just finished the eighth volume when his overtasked strength gave way. As he lay on his death-bed, it was told him that his house had been robbed. He asked if his papers were safe, and received an answer in the affirmative. "Then it matters not," he said; "for no other loss can trouble me."

The *Ecclesiastical Polity*, written in defence of the Church of England, is one of the greatest works in the language. Every part of it is of a grand character. The principles on which it is founded are broad and

general. The learning adduced and the arguments upheld, rise like solid and massive columns. If any ornaments are introduced, they assume the form of easy, natural, and magnificent figures of speech. While overhanging all, is an air of negligence always imposing and sometimes sublimely simple.

BACON.—A sad spectacle awaits us, when we turn to the life of Francis Bacon, a native of London, and son of Sir Nicholas Bacon. A perfect king in intellect, he stooped to become a slavish time-server. The love of place and state and power, was the ruling passion of his public career. He was not satisfied with the eminence which his eloquence was gaining for him, at the Bar and in the Parliament. To hurry his promotion, he paid court to his relations, the Cecils. For the same purpose, he became the *attaché* of the generous but reckless Earl of Essex, who presented him with an estate worth £2000. Nor did his gratitude hinder him from deserting his benefactor in the hour of trouble. Rather than run the risk of displeasing the Queen, he conducted the prosecution of the unfortunate Earl; and, after his execution, he wrote a pamphlet to render his character odious. The most melancholy scene, however, of Bacon's life is the last. His elevation to the lofty seat of Lord Chancellor of England, did not place him above temptation. He was accused by the Parliament of receiving bribes; and, with tears of shame, he was obliged to plead guilty; Cast down from his high dignity, he retired from public life, and not long afterwards died, deep in debt.

Bacon appeared on the field of Learning like a prince taking possession of his rightful sovereignty. Conscious authority breathed from his whole demeanour. With one comprehensive glance, he scanned the entire extent of his spacious domains. His eye rested upon the Past; and he saw what inadequate tools philosophers had been wielding, and what baseless systems they had been rearing. His vision peered into the Future; and he anticipated the luxuriant harvest of arts and sciences which should spring up in the still uncultivated field of

nature. To reorganise the whole kingdom, therefore, became his noble purpose. The code of laws which he designed was named the *Instauratio Magna*; and all his after writings were contributions to the stupendous plan. In his first book, the *De Augmentis Scientiarum*, he laid out the vast region into distinct provinces and departments. In his second book, the *Novum Organum*, he placed the hitherto neglected weapon of Induction into the hands of philosophers, shewed them how to use it, and enjoined them to dig with untiring perseverance for the precious secrets of nature. That, the force of example might not be wanting, he began, in his third book, the *Sylva Sylvarum*, to build up a natural philosophy and natural history. And that his successors might continue to advance the mighty undertaking, he left the outlines of a fourth, a fifth, and a sixth book for future ages to fill up.

Neither his keen pursuit of office, nor the profound musings of his philosophical hours, could keep Bacon from watching the passions and pursuits of the jostling world in which he moved. As the eddying current of life whirled past, each object presented its various sides towards him. Not only its broad and practical, but even its minute phases, were impressed upon his sensitive understanding. If his observation had any fault, it was a tendency to note unobvious analogies. So vivid and lively, indeed, were his ideas, that they set into easy activity all the powers of expression. Wisdom dropped from his lips in pithy and pointed apophthegms. These were followed by quaint saws from a memory richly furnished with ancient lore. When illustrations were required, his fancy was ever on the alert to supply figures, fresh and breathing, from actual life. The result was a series of *Essays*, one of the most precious collections of literary gleanings which are stored in the garner of time.

RALEIGH.—The truest son of the time, however, was Sir Walter Raleigh, the scion of an ancient B. 1552. Devonshire family. In his person he inherited D. 1618. all the many aspirations of his wondrous mother-age. Poetry, philosophy, science, politics, courtly

accomplishments, martial glory, the wonders of foreign travel, all in turn swayed his versatile soul. His career, accordingly, presents a chequered series of the most romantic episodes. At the commencement, he appears a dashing soldier, fighting freedom's battles on the Continent, or crushing the rebellious kernes in Ireland. Not long afterwards, we discern him among the brilliant throng around Queen Elizabeth, a polished and bowing courtier, spreading his rich cloak over a puddle that his royal mistress might pass on her way dry-shod. Then the stories of the teeming wealth and magnificence of the New World cross his path, and he is away, a weather-beaten adventurer, tacking into the cedar-skirted bays of Virginia, or paddling up the umbrageous labyrinths of the Orinoco. Again the scene changes. A reputed felon, falsely convicted of treason against James I., he sits writing his *History of the World* among the ominous shadows of a dungeon in the Tower. At length comes the last act of this most strange drama. On a scaffold in Old Palace Yard, on a hoar-frosty morning of October, he stands, grey-headed, lame, and racked with disease, like an old lion driven at last to bay. After an imprisonment of twelve years, he has been liberated, has been sent out to discover a gold mine in Guiana, and has failed. He has lost his eldest son, he has sacrificed his private fortune, he has "broken his brain and heart," to fill the coffers of a needy sovereign. And now, to propitiate the king of Spain, whose troops he had defeated in Guiana, he must die. After addressing the people, and commending his spirit to God, he lays his head on the block, and urges the executioner "to strike home."

The literary career of Raleigh was pursued under the most remarkable circumstances. In the baleful Tower, haunted by the most ghostly associations, and with a death-warrant hanging over his head, he sat down to write his legacy to posterity. The subject was nothing less than the *History of the World*, from the creation down to his own time. He had few or no books to which he could refer. Almost the only method of verifying his information which he possessed, was to consult some of his learned friends. Yet within his

own mind he held the most copious resources. His spirit was pervaded with true poetical feeling, and with a tone of manly eloquence. In his many adventures, both by land and sea, he had culled the ripest fruits of experience. It had also been his custom to make his books the companions of his voyage; and, while his good ship was scudding steadily before the breeze, he was in his cabin imbibing the wisdom of the ancients. The result was, that he produced a book which, though it was left unfinished, presents a wonderful collection of extensive and curious learning, acute and ingenious argument, sound and practical political views, and lofty and solemn eloquence.

HOBBS.—Seldom has there ever been such a sturdy, self-willed, and defiant philosopher as
B. 1588. Thomas Hobbes, a native of Malmesbury. His
D. 1679. intellect was hard, sharp, and penetrating in the extreme. There was scarcely the smallest particle of instinct or emotion to direct its ruthless edge. Whenever it found itself in any particular track of argument, forward it went with remorseless sweep, making frightful havoc among the favourite opinions of his fellow-men. In his *Leviathan*, for example, he rigidly reasons out one of the most paradoxical of social theories. Human society, he holds, naturally lives under a system of rapine and feud. Men have no law but their own interest; and all their virtues are merely so many different forms of selfishness. To reduce them to order they require a despotic ruler; and from his will, all laws, both political and moral, are derived. Yet, in spite of these paradoxes, the *Leviathan* and his other philosophical works will ever be considered among the most remarkable models of acute and profound psychological analysis, and clear, exact and uniform language.

TAYLOR.—Jeremy Taylor was the son of a surgeon-barber in Cambridge, and the descendant of
B. 1613. that Dr Rowland Taylor who suffered martyrdom in the reign of Bloody Mary. It was his
D. 1687. lot to fall upon times very uncongenial to his gentle and studious nature. Scarcely had he set up his domes-

tic circle in the quiet parsonage of Uppingham, when the great civil broils began to convulse the nation. Driven from his cure, he was cast upon the fluctuating tide of war. He continued to act as chaplain amid the jar and profligacy of the Royalist camp, until the defeat of his party, before Cardigan Castle, left him a prisoner in the hands of the austere Roundheads. He was then too glad to be sent adrift among the mountains of Wales, and to be allowed to teach a village school in Caermarthenshire. His marriage, indeed, made him the master of an estate in that county; but the repeated fines of the Government left him poor once more. Had it not been for the aid of John Evelyn, and the Earl of Carberry, he might have suffered the pinchings of poverty more severely. It was not till the Restoration, that Jeremy Taylor was placed in a position worthy of his resplendent and beautiful character. He was appointed Bishop of Down, Connor, and Dromore, a situation which he adorned till his death.

The uneasy tossings of a political storm could not prevent the mental activity of Jeremy Taylor. Year after year, he continued to pour forth books of devotion, volumes of sermons, and controversial treatises. In every one of these works, his genius appears adorned with all the consummate gifts and graces that ever fell to the lot of man. His manner is that of one whose whole being is kindled by some great and glowing truth. The current of his thought and feeling rolls on without stint or hindrance. He presents an immense multitude of ideas, and exposes them in all their varied lights. He brings out from the well-stocked recesses of his memory, quotations and stories and apologues and precepts of every kind, and exhibits them with the pride and pleasure of an antiquary. He conjures up images and metaphors, and lingers over them lovingly, until they kindle and shine with the mingling colours of fancy and emotion. And all the while his language is resolving itself into long and undulating sentences, sometimes exquisitely simple and beautiful, but often encumbered with an Asiatic luxuriance of quotation and simile. The most of Taylor's works, from their very

opulence, are apt to fatigue and bewilder. Yet it would be difficult to find any works that contain so much beautiful and fervid eloquence, and so much profound practical wisdom, as his *Holy Living, Holy Dying, Golden Grove, and Life of Christ*.

BAXTER.—In this age, the deadly struggle between Prelacy and Puritanism was enveloping the land in the dust of controversy. Apart from the combatants sat Richard Baxter, inhaling a purer atmosphere and taking 'a calmer survey. To his eyes, the engrossing strife seemed a squabble about semblances rather than a controversy about realities. As the tide of circumstances shifted, he did not hesitate to sympathise, sometimes with the one party, and sometimes with the other. On one occasion, he was an Episcopalian; on another, he signed the Solemn League and Covenant. First, he was an upholder of the Parliament; and then he was an advocate for the Restoration. Far more important than these matters, he considered the spreading of the great saving truths of the Gospel; and to this task all his great energies were bent. Consequently, while he was pastor of Kidderminster, and even while he was hustled about by the ceaseless commotions of the age, he never desisted from preaching. As occasion called, he also poured forth in writing his acute thoughts, sagacious observation, deep piety, and rough and vigorous eloquence. No less than one hundred and sixty-eight publications are computed to have issued from his pen. Of these, *The Call to the Unconverted*, and *The Saint's Everlasting Rest* are still among the religious guides and comforters of the community.

FULLER.—The Civil War, which brooded like a thunder-cloud over the land, did not cast a shadow upon the bright nature of Thomas Fuller, a native of Oldwinkle, in Northampton, and lecturer of The Savoy in London. While a chaplain in the Royalist army, he was as instructive, as witty, and as fascinating as he had been at the dinner-tables

in London. Nor did the blare of the trumpets and the neighing of the steeds distract him from his engrossing studies. No sooner had the army halted at any station, than off he stole to visit the celebrities of the neighbourhood. One might have seen him surveying some historic scene, or catching a local tradition from the mumbling lips of some old village beldame. The result of these antiquarian researches appeared after his death. The *Worthies of England* is a strange museum of waifs and curiosities of information regarding eminent Englishmen, and also regarding nearly every feature of their respective native shires. It is still read, while his *Church History of Britain*, his *History of the Holy War*, his *Profane and Holy States*, and his *Pisgah View of Palestine*, are comparatively neglected.

In perusing Fuller's works we appear to be traversing some enchanted region. It seems as if some frolicsome fairy had flitted before us and changed the aspect of everything. Solemn truths wear the most familiar looks. The most common-place thoughts are clothed in quaint and ingenious similes. Wherever we turn, there is a fresh succession of whimsicality. One would think that all the abysses of learning had been dredged to furnish oddities. The most diverse objects are grouped in the most absurd proximity. Solid and stern biographical facts stand in the midst of all the varied rubbish of legendary lore. Even when the author undertakes to conduct us along the sacred way of Ecclesiastical History, he cannot act like one in earnest. At every opportunity he is diverted from the straight path by the sight of novelties, and he only comes back that he may make a fresh start.

Not far surpassed by these great prose-writers were some rivals of remarkably original power. John Selden was eminent as an antiquary. Bishop Andrewes and Bishop Hall were forcible and eloquent sermon-writers. Among the miscellaneous authors, there were the ill-starred Sir Thomas Overbury, the author of *Characters*; the quaint Sir Thomas Browne, the author of the *Religio Medici*; and Robert Burton, the compiler of that museum of learned quotations called the *Anatomy of Melancholy*.

FIFTH PERIOD.

THE AGE OF THE RESTORATION AND THE REVOLUTION.

1660-1702.

Characteristics :—An immoral spirit, and a French taste, infecting Polite Literature.

The Immorality introduced by the Restoration—Its Effect on Literature.

POETS :—*Butler—Dryden—Otway—Other Poets.*

THEOLOGICALS :—*Barrow—Tillotson—South—Bunyan—Locke—Boyle.*

HISTORIANS :—*Clarendon—Burnet.*

MISCELLANEOUS WRITERS :—*Walton—Other Writers.*

A new phase of social morality was introduced along with Charles II. Under the severe rule of the Puritans, misdemeanours, not punishable before, had been prohibited by law. To shirk the penalties, many time-servers had assumed a virtuous air in public, and had indulged their bad propensities in private. This hypocrisy had not only left their vices green and rank, but had destroyed every remnant of moral sensibility. Accordingly, no sooner had the Restoration taken away the restraint, than they cast off every form of decency. They abandoned themselves to all kinds of excess, and openly gloried in their shame. Nay, they went so far as to sneer at every appearance of modesty, and to doubt whether there ever was such a thing as virtue. So far from frowning down this moral foulness, the Court smiled upon it most approvingly. The licentious king and his nobles made lax morality fashionable; and, as if the nation was not sufficiently initiated in wickedness, they introduced new shades of profligacy from France. Even the Church scarcely lifted up her voice against this worship of Satan. Her darts were all directed against a worse evil, namely, the asceticism of

the Puritans. Besides, these libertines were orthodox churchmen. They had restored the Church to its revenues and dignities, and it would seem like ingratitude to be too severe upon them for peccadilloes which, after all, were common among many loyal-hearted Royalists.

If we except the Divines, nearly all the writers of the period were infected by the pestilential moral atmosphere in which they lived. They had lost that noble aspiration after truth by which their great predecessors were animated. Their highest aim now was to secure the rewards and the favour of the great. It was therefore found necessary to adapt their productions to the French tastes of the Court. The variegated and richly-ornamented, though cumbrous, diction of the Elizabethan age was thrown aside, and prose expressed itself in short, simply-arranged, and pointed sentences. The stately music of blank verse, to which the grand thoughts of Shakespere had swept along, was discarded; and Tragedy went mincing to the jingle of rhyme. There was just one thing more which they could do to accommodate the propensities of the Court. This was, to pander to the prevalent immorality; and this many of them did not hesitate to do. Satirists held up decency and decorum to ridicule. Poets prostituted their exquisite gifts to make pieces gross enough for the pampered tastes of fashionable libertines. Dramatists went farther than all, for they uniformly represented vice as one of the essential graces of a fine gentleman, and virtue as one of the stupid absurdities of a fool. The whole province of polite literature was one pestilential swamp, which it was dangerous for any healthy mind to approach. Had it not been for the magnificent discoveries made by Newton, and others, in the field of science, this would have been the most profitless age in the whole history of English thought.

POETS.

BUTLER.—The life of Samuel Butler, a native of Worcestershire, and the author of *Hudibras*, presents a sad instance of genius pining away in neglect. The greater part of his life was

spent in discharging some obscure offices in certain noble families. Then, after the Restoration, he appeared in London, an elderly man, vainly expecting some reward from the Court, whose cause he was serving by the publication of *Hudibras*. The frivolous king chuckled over the different parts of the poem as they appeared; but scarcely ever thought of the author. Clarendon made him some fine promises; but neglected to perform them. Sick of hope deferred, the poor poet died in an obscure lodging near Covent Garden, without leaving a penny to pay his funeral expenses.

Hudibras is a burlesque, conceived after the manner of *Don Quixote*, written in octosyllabic metre, and intended to ridicule the Puritans. The hero, Hudibras, a swaggering and pedantic Presbyterian Justice, accompanied by his squire Ralph, an Independent clerk, is represented as setting out, in the style of a knight-errant, to destroy all superstition and abuses. Their characters, their accoutrements, and their adventures, are described with the most unprecedented overflow of wit. Curious scraps of learning, sensible remarks on life and manners, ingenious and far-fetched analogies, are all dragged in together, and set in the most whimsical light. So superabundant, indeed, is the grotesque illustration that the narrative loses a great part of its effect; and, though the poem is unfinished, most readers become dazzled and fatigued with the never-ceasing sparkle of wit long before they reach the end. Yet *Hudibras* holds a high place in English literature, as the most comical poem in the language, and as an inexhaustible repository of racy and most exquisitely expressed apophthegms.

DRYDEN.—The greatest poet of this period, however, was John Dryden, a native of Oldwinkle, B. 1631. in Northamptonshire, and a student of Cambridge. This man might have been an honour to his age. He was by birth and education a gentleman. His marriage with the Lady Elizabeth Howard, gave him access to the highest society. In satirical, in didactic, and even in lyric poetry, his

power was unmatched. At the same time, there was no necessity why he should sell his great gifts to the highest bidder ; for he had a small competency. Yet the moral principle within him was weak, and could not resist the rampant temptations that assailed it on all sides. To gain money and favour, he outdid all his contemporaries in sordid servility, as he outdid them all in genius. None sold his services to the government with less hesitation. None wrote more fulsome dedications to worthless courtiers. None prepared such obscene dramas to bring down the applause of depraved play-goers. He is even accused of having become a Roman Catholic, to please James II., and to obtain a pension. Certain it is, that the pension followed close upon the conversion, that this was the only occasion on which he was troubled with any religious anxiety, and that the suspicion of his having become a convert from mercenary motives is only too consistent with the rest of his history. On the other hand, it is but just to state, that he brought up his family in the Romish faith ; that he did not return to Protestantism at the Revolution, and that he remained true to his new creed till the last.

Writing on subjects which, if left to his own unbiassed taste, he would not have chosen, Dryden often wrote at a disadvantage. Many of his works do not shew the full impress of his genius. His numerous plays fail to bring out the individuality of their different characters. His panegyrics, written on persons who could excite no real admiration, are full of mere windy raptures, and of monstrously false similes. His translation of *Virgil*, though done with great pith and fluency, has not caught the exquisite elegance and calm dignity of the original. Yet there are several of his works in which his great mind shines out in its full radiance. In *The Hind and Panther*, we see his strength and closeness of reasoning. In *Alexander's Feast*, his intense animation and splendid variety of effect are apparent. In the *Fables*, there is a power of conducting a narrative which he seldom has occasion to shew elsewhere. While in *Absalom and Achitophel*, all those qualities combine with a vigorous skill in por-

traiture, to form the ablest piece of political satire in the language.

Dryden is generally acknowledged to be one of the greatest masters of rhyme, and one of the greatest reasoners in verse. It is also maintained, by Dr Johnson, that his *Essay on Dramatic Poesy* "was the first regular and valuable treatise on the art of writing."

OTWAY.—Another of the luckless sons of genius was Thomas Otway, a native of Sussex, and a student of Oxford. Some unknown circumstance compelled him to leave the university prematurely. Thrown upon the world, he turned up in London, a squalid and unsuccessful player. Then, beginning to write dramas, he was scarcely more fortunate. Some of his pieces, it is true, were highly successful; but what money he got, could not save him from a most miserable end. He died in an ale-house on Tower Hill, choked, it is said, by the first mouthful of bread which he had taken after a protracted fast.

Otway's dramatic powers were not of the highest cast. His fancy was dull, his store of imagery meagre, and his knowledge of human nature narrow. Yet within his own range of faculty, he wrought with great success. His *Venice Preserved* has ever since kept possession of the stage, as one of the most affecting of domestic tragedies. The individuality of the different wo-begone characters is well brought out; the deepening horror of the plot is managed with great skill; and the throes of passion and of anguish are expressed with a simplicity and an intensity that have never been surpassed.

Among the less notable poets of this period were the musical though spiritless Waller; Marvell, the friend and panegyrist of Milton; and the Earl of Roscommon, the only "unspotted" poet in the days of Charles II.

THEOLOGIANs.

TILLOTSON.—John Tillotson, a student of Cambridge, and afterwards Archbishop of Canterbury, was one of the most sagacious and liberal-minded men of his day. Though brought up as a Puritan, he set himself candidly to study the constitution of the Church of England. So moderate was the conclusion to which he came, that when the Act of Uniformity was passed, he did not hesitate to obey it, and to accept a curacy. Nor was he henceforth, like the generality of apostates, a bigot. In the high position to which his fame as a preacher afterwards raised him, he was noted for his want of prejudice. Recognising the merits of Nonconformists, he advocated leniency towards them. Not overlooking the failings of the Church, he endeavoured to abolish non-residency among the clergy.

Tillotson's *Sermons* present a counterpart to his life. They insist earnestly and directly upon the great truths of religious belief and practice. Throughout, there is an utter want of all affectation. It is evident that the author does not aim at any high rhetorical effect; but that he merely wishes to express his meaning in the easiest form. His language, though often loose and inelegant, is always clear and forcible, and sometimes grandly simple. Its greatest praise arises from the fact, that it furnished to Dryden the key-note for his masculine English prose.

BARROW.—Dr Isaac Barrow, a native of London, and a student of Cambridge, had one of the most scholarlike spirits of that age. Truth was eagerly sought by him in whatever province she might be found. He was equally at home in medicine, theology, mathematics, and classical lore. In several of these branches, too, his eminence was publicly rewarded. He obtained, in succession, the chair of Greek at Cambridge, the chair of Geometry at Gresham College, the Lucasian chair of Mathematics at Cambridge, and the Mastership of Trinity College. His

last and greatest promotion was to the Chancellorship of his native university.

Besides his various mathematical treatises, written in Latin, which give him a distinguished place in science, Barrow is the author of a collection of *Sermons*. These are among the richest treasures in the theological department of the language. Each subject is treated comprehensively and at the same time minutely. There is a manifest anxiety lest he should omit the very slightest phases of the thought under consideration. So much was this the case, that he transcribed some of his sermons several times, expanding them to such a length that, when preached, they utterly wore out the patience of the audience. At the same time, his language was regularly arranged, clear, and exquisitely nervous and precise.

SOUTH.—One of the most peculiar men of this age was Dr Robert South, a native of London and a student of Oxford. Several of the sentiments of this witty and learned divine were very extreme. So indifferent was he to promotion, that repeated offers of a bishopric could not tempt him from his country rectory of Islip in Oxfordshire. So blind was his reverence for kings, that he declared from the pulpit that the "blessed saint," Charles I., deserved the title of "Father of his Country," were it for no other reason than having begotten such a son as Charles II. To such a frantic pitch did he carry his enmity against Nonconformists that he called them vipers, and lifted up his voice against the Act which gave them toleration. Nay, on such a solemn subject as the Trinity, and against such a respectable opponent as Dr Sherlock, he became so personal in his abuse, that the king was forced to interfere, and forbid them both to argue any more.

Dr South can scarcely be called a Christian divine. Throughout his *Sermons* it would be difficult to find a spark of that charity which ought to characterise a preacher of the Gospel. He should rather be considered a surly satirist in a clerical garb. He has a sour and touchy temper, a keen eye for faults and blemishes,

a matchless power of dragging these, with all their absurdities, into the light of common sense, and a copious supply of pungent mother-wit and sneering railery. So complete is his equipment, in fact, that he is too ready to bring it into play. It does not matter who his butts are. Provided they differ from him, they must be riddled by his arrows. Nay, the less the difference is, the greater is his animosity. Witness with what ineffable contempt and venom he describes the long extempore prayers and the responsive groanings at a conventicle : and how maliciously he parodies the discursive and somewhat affected similes of good, honest Jeremy Taylor. At the same time, his sermons will always hold a high place in English Literature, for their clear pithy arguments, and their racy idiomatic language.

BUNYAN.—While these divines were laying at the university the foundation of their future eminence, there was a poor illiterate tinker tramping among the villages of Bedfordshire, who was destined to outrival them all. It was through much tribulation that the swearing, godless John Bunyan entered the Kingdom of Heaven. Several providential escapes first made him pause in his headlong career. The throes of conscience acting upon a morbidly sensitive nature then began to kindle a hell within and around him. For days and nights together, his strong frame shook like an aspen at the thought of death and judgment. Fiends, he imagined, dogged his footsteps, and, whispering in his ear, urged him to sell his soul. Even after he was converted, and when he was in the act of preaching, the most appalling blasphemies would be suggested to his mind, and it was with an extreme effort that he could restrain his tongue from uttering them aloud. But after he had subsided into the joy and peace of believing, Bunyan became notable for his calm apostolic zeal. All the imprisonments and threats of a persecuting government could not force him to desist from preaching to his poor perishing neighbours. "If you let me out to day," he said; "I will preach again to-morrow." During twelve years

he lay in Bedford jail, instructing his fellow-prisoners in the Gospel, and composing his immortal *Pilgrim's Progress*. And, on his liberation, he exercised such a superintending care over the Baptists, that he was popularly styled "Bishop Bunyan." He went his rounds throughout the country, settling the quarrels, relieving the wants, and confirming the faith of his brethren. He was just coming from reconciling a father and son, when he caught the fever which brought his life to a premature close.

The history of the composition of the *Pilgrim's Progress* is remarkable. The author's study was the damp jail of Bedford; his library consisted of the Bible and Fox's *Martyrs*; and all his literary art only enabled him to scrawl words often badly spelt, and sentences often ungrammatically constructed. It occurred to him to write a work in which the Christian life should be represented as consisting of stages. All at once his idea took the form of a pilgrimage. His fertile imagination suggested the gloomy scenery of the way—the Slough of Despond, the Hill Difficulty, the Valley of Humiliation, the Valley of the Shadow of Death, Doubting Castle, and the Enchanted Ground. From the different classes of men with whom he had come in contact, he selected representatives to people the visionary land. His own deep experience of a believer's trials furnished the fears, the mishaps, and the triumphs of the journey. When the narrative ran on, plain and simple, his colloquial English was sufficiently graphic. When great events and glorious scenes were to be depicted, his style became imbued with the fervid emotion and the sublime imagery of the Bible. The book was finished; and surpassed all allegorical works that had ever been written. It contained just so much of allegory as to be deeply suggestive of doctrinal and practical truths. At the same time, it contained just so much of real life as to hold the reader's interest enchained from the beginning of the story down to the very end.

Bunyan wrote another allegory, the *Holy War*, second in excellence to the *Pilgrim's Progress* alone.

LOCKE.—John Locke, a native of Somersetshire, and a student of Oxford, may, though a philosopher, be conveniently classed with the theologians. The genius of this great man was nurtured amid a series of bracing influences. His Puritanic parents inspired him with a love for freedom of thought. His medical studies trained him to search for truth by a careful analysis of facts. His intercourse with the greatest politicians of the age, and his public employment, both at home and abroad, made him suspicious of all mere abstract notions and untried theories. The result was a sound philosophical spirit, which produced two of the most beneficial works of the day. The first, the *Letters on Toleration*, diffused a benign influence through politics. The second, the *Essay on the Human Understanding*, introduced a new era in the history of philosophy.

Locke's merits as a philosopher are great. His careful scrutiny of many mental phenomena laid the foundation of Psychology; and his severe mode of seeking for truth, taught metaphysicians to ascertain facts before they built theories. Although his powers of expression are not equal to his powers of thought, his style presents many specimens of simple and touching beauty.

BOYLE.—The Honourable Robert Boyle, a son of the Earl of Cork, and one of the founders of the Royal Society, was a remarkable example of a Christian philosopher. His love of truth was a sacred passion. His ultimate object was, to benefit mankind, and to trace the glory of God in the material universe. In this spirit he consecrated all his time and all his wealth to experimental investigations in natural philosophy and chemistry. The devout feeling with which he prosecuted these studies, is shewn by the various religious treatises which he published.

Nearly all Boyle's literary works treat of the connection between Religion and the study of Experimental Philosophy. They are full of devout sentiments and shrewd observations, expressed in clear and precise language.

During this period there were other eminent theologians. Edward Stillingfleet and Dr William Sherlock distinguished themselves in controversies on the Trinity; Dr Ralph Cudworth wrote a philosophical treatise, entitled *The True Intellectual System of the Universe*; Dr John Pearson published a celebrated *Exposition on the Creed*; and the great Newton left behind him *Observations upon the Prophecies of Holy Writ*.

HISTORIANS.

CLARENDON.—The Royalist view of the great Civil War was represented by Edward Hyde, a native of Wiltshire, and afterwards Earl of Clarendon. This man, by his prudence and ability, rose to a very high place among his own party. He was one of the councillors of Charles I. during the Civil War; and, during the exile of the Court, he was the chief adviser of Charles II. On the Restoration, accordingly, his fortune was in the ascendant. He was installed in the Chancellorship. The helm of affairs was put entirely into his hand. His daughter was the wife of James, the king's brother; and he expected that his grandchildren might one day ascend the throne. But Clarendon's policy was not adapted for those trying times. The Commons began to detest him, on account of his arrogance. The king began to be indifferent about him, because he protested against the vices of the Court. The Great Seal was taken from him; he was impeached by the Commons; and, in order to retain his head, he was forced to go into perpetual exile.

The literary character of Clarendon has been concisely summed up by Hallam. "He is excellent in everything that he has performed with care; his characters are beautifully delineated; his sentiments have often a noble gravity, which the length of his periods, far too great in itself, seems to befit; but in the general course of his narrative, he is negligent of grammar and perspicuity, with little choice of words, and therefore sometimes idiomatic, without ease or elegance."

BURNET.—The great Whig historian of the time was

B. 1643. Gilbert Burnet, a native of Edinburgh, and a
 D. 1715. graduate of Aberdeen. The practical sagacity
 of this divine, not veiled by much modesty,
 raised him to many honours. A Divinity Chair at
 Glasgow was given to him when in Scotland. In
 England, his success was still greater. Congregations
 were wont to applaud him while he was preaching.
 Parliament tendered him a vote of thanks for his *His-
 tory of the Reformation*. He was admitted into the
 confidence of some of the greatest statesmen of the age;
 and even the kings, Charles and James, stooped to con-
 ciliate his influence. Yet amid these honours, so trying
 to his native vanity, Burnet maintained his integrity.
 He rebuked Charles for his vices. Rather than coun-
 tenance the tyranny of James, he fled to the Continent.
 Nor was his conduct less consistent when he returned
 in triumph in the train of his patron, William of
 Orange. As Bishop of Salisbury, he became the model
 of a self-sacrificing clergyman, devoting a great part of
 his time to visiting, and a great part of his income to
 benevolence.

Burnet was a ready and a happy writer. His
 thoughts flowed upon him with ease and order, arrang-
 ing themselves in short and simple sentences. His style
 was natural, lively, and sometimes eloquent. It was
 his professed aim to be clear even at the risk of being
 diffuse. As a historian, Burnet was anxious to repre-
 sent facts in as true a light as possible; and he suc-
 ceeded as far as any keen partisan could succeed. The
History of the Reformation, and the *History of My Own
 Times*, will always continue to be among the chief
 authorities for the annals of their respective periods.

MISCELLANEOUS WRITERS.

WALTON.—It is a relief to pass from the bustling
 actors of this unquiet age, and to contemplate
 B. 1593. such a picture of serene peacefulness as the life
 D. 1683. of Izaak Walton presents to us. This London
 tradesman had brought from his native Stafford a guile-
 less disposition. Under the preaching of Dr Donne,
 that disposition had been changed into the piety of a

true believer. With the uneasy spirit of the generation around him, his soul had now no sympathy. He sat contentedly in his small shop in Fleet Street, selling his linen, and poring over his favourite poets and natural historians. When a holiday came round, he went a-fishing into the country, and abandoned himself to the enjoyment of nature. He loitered by the quiet windings of the Lea, plying his angle, drinking in every rural sight and sound, and breathing out thankfulness to the Giver of all Good. This peaceful life had a still more peaceful close. Retiring from business at the age of fifty, he spent the remainder of his long life in the quiet country parsonages of friends, who loved and revered his patriarchal character.

Walton's *Complete Angler* is one of the unique books of the language. An angler, a hunter, and a falconer, are represented as taking an excursion into the country, and commending to each other their own particular sports. At the end of the argument, the hunter professes himself a convert to the opinions of the angler, and agrees to accompany him for the purpose of learning his art. The two arrive at the stream, and the angler begins his instructions. He unfolds the secrets of catching different kinds of fish, illustrates his precepts by frequent practice; and, to relieve the tedium of the lesson, initiates his pupil into all the delights of the country. They sit upon cowslip banks, and under honeysuckle hedges, enlarging upon the bliss of contentment and a rural life. They listen to the lilt of a milkmaid, and quaff a jug of milk, fresh from the udder of "the red cow." They enjoy the good cheer, and the lavender-scented beds of Trout Hall; and they wind up, by arranging another angling excursion on some future day. Walton also wrote *Lives of Donne, Wotton, Hooker, Herbert, and Sanderson*. These, like his other works, are characterised by a quiet and genial humour, a child-like purity of sentiment, and a fervent reverence for goodness and piety.

In this age, no mean rank in prose-writing was attained by such men as John Evelyn, the author of the interesting *Diary*, and Sir William Temple, who has been considered one of the founders of our regular English prose.

SIXTH PERIOD.

AGE OF ADDISON AND POPE.

1702-1727.

Characteristic :—The Literature of Artificial Life.

Improvement of Social Morality—The English Muse transformed into an affected Lady of the Court.

POETS :—*Congreve—Pope—Other Poets.*

ESSAYISTS :—*Steele—Addison—Other Essayists.*

PHILOSOPHERS :—*Clarke—Shaftesbury—Berkeley—Other Philosophers.*

MISCELLANEOUS WRITERS :—*Defoe—Swift—Other Writers.*

THOUGH society grovelled in licentiousness, the sense of decency was not extinguished. In course of time, healthy tastes revived, and began to nauseate the foul mental food that was prepared for them. To bring this feeling to a height, it was only necessary that some literary reformer should appear. Accordingly, no sooner had Jeremy Collier published his *Short View of the Profaneness and Immorality of the English Stage*, than public opinion took the side of virtue. In vain did Congreve, and other dramatists, try to defend themselves. They only showed that their cause was utterly indefensible; and they were compelled to retire in confusion and disgrace. While literary taste was thus undergoing a change among the middle classes, the same result had been effected at Court by a different cause. Queen Mary had been devoutly religious. Whatever might have been the vices of her husband William, he had been outwardly correct and serious. It was therefore considered highly improper for any nobleman to patronise a book that was grossly licentious. Yet, at the same time, there were reasons why the courtiers

should continue to encourage literature. Parliamentary speeches, in those days, were not reported and circulated throughout the country. It was only by means of pamphlets that any political opinions could be impressed upon the public. Literary talent was therefore an indispensable aid to statesmen who wished to hold office. Accordingly, it became the policy of every new government to retain the services of authors, by giving them lucrative posts. In this way, Addison, Steele, Prior, Tickell, Congreve, and Gay, all received remuneration from the public purse.

Along with this social improvement, there was an improvement in literature. The shameless pandering to licentious tastes was discarded. Authors tried to please by new and more seemly arts. They became polished, sprightly, ingenious, and pointed. Yet the reformation was by no means complete. There was still a great want of the vigour and freshness of reality. French taste cramped every thought and twisted it into an unnatural shape. The English Muse was no longer the simple, artless, impulsive, outspoken maiden that she had once been. The atmosphere of the Court had killed her natural graces. Her manners had stiffened down into the prudery and affectation of a Maid of Honour. She would not give full vent to her feelings, as in the days of Shakespere : such a practice was vulgar. She would not talk in a libertine strain, as in the days of Dryden : such a practice was at present out of fashion. Her highest ambition, was to preserve a well-bred air of elegance, vivacity, and cleverness. In all her speech, the manner was ever more important than the matter. If she had any favourite subjects, these were the topics that were discussed in the fashionable world. She rattled scandal with inimitable smartness. She told stories with unruffled composure and appropriate melo-dramatic effect. She made love with the most ingenious flatteries and the most finely mimicked raptures. The only kind of speech in which she was earnest was satire ; and in this her language was often severely direct and natural.

POETS.

CONGREVE.—The only species of the drama that attained any degree of excellence was Comedy.

B. 1670. It was a vigorous and faithful representation of the manners of the time, down even to their most revolting features. The plots were made up of the low intrigues in which high society then delighted; and the characters were portraits of those bedizened ruffians who made villany their business and their boast. Of all the comic dramatists of this period, the wittiest was William Congreve, a native of Yorkshire, and a student of Dublin. The appearance of the young, handsome and brilliant Congreve in London, was a perfect ovation. No sooner had he come out as a theatrical writer than his *Old Bachelor* and his *Double Dealer* won the admiration of the fashionable and the learned. The Prime Minister, Montague, hastened to give him a post under government. Old John Dryden wrote some magniloquent heroics, placing him on the same level with Shakespere. He was only twenty-seven when, by universal consent, he was elevated to the rank of a classic. Henceforth, accordingly, Congreve did nothing but allow himself to be honoured and feasted. His summers were spent on the beautiful estates of noblemen. His winters were passed amid the splendour and gaiety of London festivities. When he grew old and gouty and blind, the great Duchess of Marlborough became his nurse. And when he died, Dukes and Earls bore his pall and laid him in Westminster Abbey.

The comedies of Congreve were a picture of the fashionable world in which he lived. The incidents were full of life and interest; the characters were accomplished, lively, and brilliant; and the flow of conversation was ever copious, varied, and effective. Yet there was a false glitter about the entire scene. It wanted that pure tone of morality, which alone can give lasting freshness to such a picture. Consequently, the tawdry pageant was soon pushed aside, and now lies among the rubbish of the Past.

POPE.—Alexander Pope was the son of a Roman Catholic, who was a linen-draper in London, B. 1688. and who afterwards retired to a country-house D. 1744. in Windsor Forest. Though a sickly decrepit dwarf, the little boy had a master-mind. Before he was twelve, he was expressing his thoughts in rhyme. At sixteen, he had formed a style of versification which surpassed that of all his contemporaries. Scarcely was he twenty-three, when his *Essay on Criticism* appeared, and rivalled the *Ars Poetica* of Horace. Not long afterwards, his *Rape of the Lock* placed him above all his competitors, and gained for him the poetical crown. Then the proceeds of his translation of Homer enabled him to buy a villa at Twickenham, and to entertain his friends in a style worthy of the prince of poets. Pope, however, did not enjoy his fame. Stung with envy, the puny race of scribblers began to vilify him. His nature was far too morbidly sensitive not to writhe under their very feeblest blows. In a frenzy of revenge, he turned all his powers against this despicable crew. His last days were chiefly occupied with satires, in which the dullness, the poverty, and the wretchedness of these Grub Street authors were maliciously held up to ridicule.

Pope was one of the greatest builders of "lofty rhyme." Whatever subject he chose, he treated in a masterly style. His keen observation gave him a thorough command over the materials. His artistic skill arranged all the different parts. His lively fancy supplied the illustrations and the poetical ornaments. Then, with his masterly power of versification he expressed the whole in a rhyme so musical, so terse, so full of point and well-balanced antithesis, that it acted like a charm upon the ear, the understanding, and the fancy. Besides these general qualities, the different poems of Pope had many excellent special qualities. The *Essay on Criticism* is a well-reasoned, well-versified, theory of poetry. The *Rape of the Lock* is the finest mock-heroic in any language. In the *Epistle from Eloisa to Abelard*, the poet reaches an unwonted depth of pathos. In the translation, or

rather paraphrase of Homer, though he misses the spirit of the original, he produces an extremely spirited poem. Throughout his *Essay on Man*, there is a profusion of exquisitely pointed moral apophthegms. Nor does he fail when the subject is unworthy of his genius. His *Dunciad* is resplendent with invention, wit, and humour; and towards the close, it rises almost to the heights of sublimity.

Pope had several contemporaries, who, though they did not possess anything like his genius, were yet good versifiers. There are an ingenious fancy and a happy diction in the odes of Matthew Prior; the *Beggar's Opera* of John Gay is so good that it still keeps possession of the stage; and Thomas Parnell's *Hermit* is notable for the sweetness and solemnity of its rhythm.

Of this age, also, were two popular dramatists, Sir John Vanbrugh, the author of *The Provoked Wife*; and George Farquhar, the author of *The Beaux' Stratagem*.

ESSAYISTS.

STEELE.—This period was by preëminence the age of the English Essay. That kind of paper
B. 1676. was intended to comment, in an easy and familiar strain, on the vices, virtues, habits, and humours, of society. It was generally published daily, and was served up at the breakfast tables of fashionable people, along with the bohea and rolls. The man who had the honour of being the first essayist was Sir Richard Steele, a native of Ireland, and an *alumnus* of Charter House School and the University of Oxford. Dick Steele, as he was called, was the most impressible and the most pliant of mortals. The merest whim or the slightest temptation carried him completely off his feet. By keeping at his studies, he might have inherited his uncle's estate; but his own vagaries were more tempting. Within a few years, he was a swaggering soldier, a seeker after the Philosopher's Stone, a gay man about town, and a penitent religious author. It was to no good purpose that he received a handsome

dowry with his second wife, and that he obtained several lucrative offices under government. Fine dresses, fine equipages, and tavern suppers, were irresistible. His guineas seemed to evaporate as soon as they came into his hand. One day he was careering in a carriage-and-four. The next day he was shedding tears of repentance in a spunging-house. At last the patience of his creditors came to an end; and he was obliged to give up his property and to retire into Caermarthenshire. Yet, in spite of all these social infirmities, Steele did several important services to literature. He started those original and model periodical papers, the *Tatler*, *Spectator*, and *Guardian*; he was the means of bringing into play Addison's powers as an essayist; and he was one of the earliest among the comic writers of that age who made virtue honourable and vice alone ridiculous.

Steele is one of the most entertaining writers on city life. His intimacy with the manners of London coffee-houses and drawing-rooms is great. His mode of viewing everything is genial and sympathetic. The scenes he represents are generally glimpses of gaiety and festivity. The persons he introduces are generally giddy pleasure-hunters of both sexes. His own demeanour throughout is that of a kind elderly man, who wishes to see everything cheerful around him. He listens with a grave face to all the trifling cares and crotchets of his characters. Then he puts them off with sly and good-natured humour, and winds up by telling them to be good and virtuous.

ADDISON.—Among the many genial men of that age, no figure awakens such delightful associations as that of Joseph Addison, the son of an English dean. His person was tall, and his features were regular and pleasing. His mind was adorned with all the graces of learning; and his heart glowed with love to God and benevolence to man. In private life, he was pure and pious. In public life, he was upright, consistent, and free from all party rancour. Among strangers his bearing was timid, unassuming,

B. 1672.

D. 1719.

and taciturn. Among friends his whole soul appeared in all its fascinations of wit, humour, kindness, and sociality. "He must," says Thackeray; "have been one of the finest gentlemen the world ever saw." It is no wonder, therefore, that a man of this princely nature, in his career through life, received nothing but honour. When he was still a Fellow at Oxford, the government took notice of him, and sent him abroad to study. On his return, a course of promotion awaited him. He was commissioned by the ministry to celebrate, in verse, the Battle of Blenheim. Among other preferments, the high office of Secretary of State was conferred upon him. And when he retired from public life, it was into a high social position. The pension which he received might almost have kept a nobleman; and the lady whom he had previously married was the Countess of Warwick. But amid all this splendour, Addison continued mindful of his true vocation. In his contributions to the *Tatler*, *Spectator*, and *Guardian*, he was still the gentle and winning monitor of virtue and religion; and on his death-bed he summoned his profligate step-son "to see how a Christian could die."

The first works of Addison are not worthy of the fame which he afterwards acquired. They consist of a few graceful Latin poems, a book of travels, a dissertation on medals, a poem on the *Campaign* of Marlborough, and a stiff classical tragedy, entitled *Cato*. It is in his *Tatlers*, *Spectators*, and *Guardians*, that his true genius beams forth. There he appears as one of the most fascinating teachers the world ever saw. His demeanour is at once gentle, cheerful, and pious. His language is simple, clear, and beautiful as his own nature. As he gives his daily lessons, there is no winning art of instruction left untried. The foibles of human nature are pointed out with the kindest, slickest, and most humorous smile. Amusing characters are described with all the delicate and varied effect of nature. The precepts of morality are inculcated in the most ingenious allegories, and in eastern stories as entrancing as the *Arabian Nights*. Above all, he is ever ready, in a tone of subdued and solemn eloquence, to

give utterance to his deep musings regarding the glorious nature of God. "Commend me," says Thackeray; "to this dear preacher without orders—this parson in the tye-wig."

Associated with Steele and Addison in the production of periodical essays, were Eustace Budgell and John Hughes.

PHILOSOPHERS.

CLARKE.—Dr Samuel Clarke, a native of Norwich, and a student of Cambridge, was one of the
B. 1675. most argumentative of philosophers. From his
D. 1729. early mathematical studies, his mind had acquired a habit of severe and close reasoning. When he came to treat of philosophical subjects, the same mode of argument came ready to his hand. He tried to deduce from axiomatic principles the being and attributes of God. In a similar manner, and with a similar unsatisfactory result, he endeavoured to establish the eternal distinction between virtue and vice. Many of Dr Clarke's published *Sermons* display great copiousness and elegance of style, and may be termed models of argumentative preaching.

SHAFTESBURY.—A more successful speculator was Anthony Ashley Cooper, the third Earl of
B. 1671. Shaftesbury. While engaged in his parlia-
D. 1713. mentary duties, he found time to produce several papers on subjects connected, either directly or indirectly, with moral science. After his death, these were published, under the title of *Characteristics of Men, Manners, Opinions, and Times*, and obtained great fame. In spite of much affectation, many parts were greatly admired for an occasional loftiness of thought and of diction. In the present day, however, it is the *Inquiry concerning Virtue*, on which his fame rests. In this paper he touches upon certain truths, which are now considered the most essential parts of every sound system of Ethics. Man, he asserts, has

certain affections which aim simply at doing good to his neighbour. These, when apprehended by an intelligence, show a certain propriety and loveliness. The faculty which apprehends them is a feeling, and is called the Moral Sense. Thus, Shaftesbury holds, in opposition to Hobbes, that human nature is not altogether selfish; and, in opposition to Clarke, that our moral ideas are emotions of the heart, and not mere ideas of the head.

BERKELEY.—In that age, there was not a more happily-constituted spirit than that of Dr B. 1684. George Berkeley, a native of the county of D. 1753. Kilkenny, and a student of Dublin. His great mental power was beautified by a singular amiability. No sooner had he come to London than he called forth admiration from some of the most rancorous men of the time. Pope ascribed to him "every virtue under Heaven;" and Atterbury said, that none but an angel could have finer gifts and graces. Foremost among all his qualities shone a disinterested spirit. Having thrown up an income of £1100 a-year, he spent seven years in the Bermudas in a vain attempt to convert the natives. Nor did his elevation to the see of Cloyne stimulate his ambition. He refused any further preferment; and, to avoid the crime of non-residency, he would even have given up his bishopric, had the king accepted his resignation.

The intellect of Berkeley was very keen. The mere outward appearances and accidental associations of things did not satisfy his gaze. He pierced into the very heart and reality of objects. In his *Theory of Vision*, he brought forward, among several other opinions now universally accepted in Optics, the truth, that the eye acquires the perceptions of distance and figure only by experience. In his metaphysical works, too, he showed that the supposed basis or framework of sensible qualities, called *matter*, was a mere fancy of philosophers, and that the only objects which were known by us to exist were these qualities themselves. Nor was his style less refined than his ideas. His lan-

guage, simple, elegant, and happy, was always capable of expressing the subtlest abstractions and the most delicate shades of thought.

There are certain theologians that may be conveniently arranged under this head. These are, Richard Bentley, the famous classical scholar; Francis Atterbury, the notorious Tory partizan; Charles Leslie, author of *A Short and Easy Method with the Deists*; Philip Doddridge, the godly Nonconformist divine; and Matthew Henry, the famous Biblical commentator.

MISCELLANEOUS WRITERS.

DEFOE.—Daniel Defoe, the son of a London butcher, was, during a long life, the mere plaything of fortune. He tried, in succession, the trades of a hosier, a tile-maker, and a woollen-merchant; and he failed in them all. Scarcely more successful was he as a writer. The many political pamphlets, which he dashed off in the heat of controversy, provoked the resentment of the House of Commons. He was fined, pilloried, and lay in Newgate for nearly two years. The success of his *Robinson Crusoe* gave him a high position, but his subsequent novels scarcely maintained it. After producing no less than *two hundred and ten* works, he died deep in debt.

Defoe did not possess the imagination of a poet. He could not summon up great scenes, enveloped in all their spirit-stirring associations. His imagination more nearly resembled that of an able legal counsel who has a thorough command over all the bare details of a case. The events of his novels follow each other without the slightest appearance of effort. The scenes are described minutely, down to the very smallest concomitant circumstance. So natural is the effect, that his tales may be said to be word-photographs. In reading *Robinson Crusoe*, *The History of the Great Plague*, and the *Memoirs of a Cavalier*, it is difficult to believe that they are anything else than true narratives.

SWIFT.—The greatest prose-writer, however, of that

time was Jonathan Swift, a native of Ireland, B. 1667. but an Englishman by descent. The circumstances which shaped his career were very unfortunate. At Dublin University he was a witty penniless idler. Then, entering the family of Sir William Temple, he was for ten years, nominally a chaplain, but really a despised menial. His lot was scarcely less pitiable when his genius had made him the voice of the Tory party. After he had been a tool to the government in many a sordid intrigue, the highest reward he received was the Deanery of St Patrick's, Dublin. The expected bishopric never came; and he was compelled to return, at length, to his exile in Ireland. It is not to be wondered, therefore, that the latter days of Swift were intensely wretched. His many disappointments, acting upon a temper naturally resentful, turned him into a misanthrope. His irritation was aggravated by the memory of the two beautiful women who had loved him, and whose hearts he had broken. At length disease of the brain came, and completed the mental ruin. During the last five years of his life he paced about through his house, a gloomy and silent mapiac.

Many of Swift's works were political pamphlets on the passing questions of the day, and they have now, therefore, lost a great part of their interest. Those works of his which are still popular are, *The Tale of a Tub*, a satire upon Roman Catholics and Presbyterians; and *Gulliver's Travels*, a satire upon human nature itself. In these two satirical romances we see the effect which a life of disappointment can have on the depraved disposition of man. The author's "milk of human kindness" seems to have been completely changed into gall. His satirical venom is of the subtlest and deadliest kind. Throughout it assumes the form of a keen, dry, withering irony. Nothing is safe from its blighting touch. The pitiable infirmities of mortal nature, the sacred feelings of the heart, and the dread mysteries of religion, are all treated in the same sneering style. At the same time, however, there are many features in Swift's writings which are worthy of imitation. His knowledge of human nature is great. His narratives have the order

and minuteness of reality. Above all, his style presents a specimen of bare, pithy, expressive English, which has never been surpassed. Swift was also the author of several poems, written in the same cold, dry, matter-of-fact style as his prose.

There were other miscellaneous writers, who were very eminent in their day. Dr John Arbuthnot gained great fame by his *History of John Bull*; Viscount Bolingbroke was known, after his death, by his *Idea of a Patriot King*; and Lady Mary Wortley Montague was a spirited letter-writer.

SEVENTH PERIOD.

AGE OF JOHNSON AND THE GREAT HISTORIANS.

1727-1800.

Characteristic :—The re-awakening of a more natural spirit.

The Dependence of Authors upon the Public—A less affected Style.

POETS :—*Young—Thomson—Gray—Collins—Cowper—Burns.*

PHILOSOPHERS :—*Butler—Smith—Reid—Paley—Other Philosophers.*

HISTORIANS :—*Hume—Robertson—Gibbon—Other Historians.*

NOVELISTS :—*Richardson—Fielding—Smollett—Other Novelists.*

MISCELLANEOUS WRITERS :—*Johnson—Goldsmith—Burke—Boswell.*

A change for the better began to appear in literature. Statesmen and noblemen discontinued their patronage. Authors began to expect their remuneration from the sale of their books alone. To please the public, therefore, became their chief effort. For this purpose, they found it necessary to be less conventional and more natural. Poets ceased to be sparkling and epigrammatic, and gave free vent to their emotions. Historians entered with a spirit, at once dignified and impassioned, into the great scenes of the past. Novelists continued to paint manners in that severely faithful style which Defoe had introduced. The only authors of any note, who were still cramped by the formalism of a preceding age, were Richardson and Johnson.

POETS.

YOUNG.—Edward Young, a native of Hampshire, and a student of Oxford, was doomed to a life of disappointment. He frittered away the best part of his life in hanging upon the skirts of

B. 1681.

D. 1765.

courtiers, and in the end received nothing greater than the post of one of his Majesty's chaplains. Nor, after he had settled down as a quiet country parson, did he enjoy the domestic happiness which he expected. Within the space of five years, his two step-children and his wife died; and he was forced to seek a solace for his anguish in the composition of his *Night Thoughts*.

Young's *Night Thoughts* is described by Professor Spalding as "a work eloquent, perhaps, rather than poetical; dissertative where true poetry would have been imaginative, and studded with conceits as thickly as the metaphysical poems of the seventeenth century; but yet dealing in a fit spirit with the most sublime of all themes, and suggesting to meditative minds much of imagery and feeling, as well as of religious reflection."

THOMSON.—It was an important era in the history of English poetry, when James Thomson, a native of Roxburghshire, appeared in London. Though he was a friendless, penniless lad, in the heart of the mighty Babylon, the luck of his countrymen attended him. His soft, amiable disposition, and the fresh beauties of his poem on *The Seasons*, gained him several influential friends. He was appointed travelling tutor to the son of the future Lord Chancellor; and, on his return, he received a pension, and the office of Surveyor-General of the Leeward Islands. His means were now sufficient to enable him to retire to a suburban retreat worthy of the author of *The Seasons*. The house was situated within the embowering shades of Richmond; the rooms were luxuriously furnished; and the cellars were stored with the most generous liquors. He entertained his friends from the city, or he loitered among his hedges and fruit trees, dreaming of that scene of æsthetic pleasure which he was at that very time describing in his *Castle of Indolence*. A long prospect of happiness was still before him, when a cold, caught on the Thames, brought on a fatal fever.

The Seasons are not without faults. The sentiments are sometimes trite and prolix; the diction is often

slightly bombastic ; and the blank verse is often monotonous. Yet the author is evidently thoroughly inspired with the subject. He describes nature with all the fond minuteness, the unflagging enthusiasm, and the exaggerating eloquence of a lover. As we read his pages, the Seasons, with all their imposing trains and accompaniments, pass before us in stately procession, and we feel through all our senses the joyous freshness of Spring, the green luxuriance of Summer, the golden plenty of Autumn, and the bleak desolation of Winter. Even more admirable is the *Castle of Indolence*, a poem written in the Spenserian stanza. For delicious fancy, delicate expression, and a slumberous musical flow, it has never been surpassed.

GRAY.—Thomas Gray was born at Cornhill, London. He attended Eton, and became a Fellow and afterwards a Professor of Cambridge. B. 1716. D. 1771. This poet led the life of a literary epicure. During the greater part of the year, he remained in his snug room at Cambridge, revelling in the beauties of Greek poetry. Occasionally, the monotony of his pursuits was relieved by a sojourn amid the intellectual excitement of London. At other times, he made an excursion into the country to stimulate his imagination by the great sights of nature. In this manner his days were spent, until an attack of gout cut him off, in his fifty-fifth year.

It would be difficult to find more exquisite poems than the *Ode on Eton College*, *The Bard*, *The Progress of Poesy*, and the *Elegy in a Country Churchyard*. In these Gray shows himself to be a true poet. His notions of his art are large and comprehensive ; his imagination teems with the forms of metaphor ; and his diction is massive, gorgeous, and imposing. Pervading all, is a tone of moralising, beautiful and solemn, like the glow of the setting sun. His poetry, in fact, resembles a rich piece of sculpture. The story is never told by bare words and letters. Every idea is expressed by solid, out-standing figures, vigorously grouped, and harmoniously tinted.

COLLINS.—One of the most luckless of the literary adventurers who ever came to London was
B. 1720. William Collins, the son of a Chichester hat-
D. 1758. ter, and a student of Oxford. His nature was not sufficiently robust to weather the cold winter of adversity. The failure which attended the publication of his *Odes*, nipped his enthusiasm. He sank into indolence and dissipation; a hopeless debility, both in mind and body, followed; and he died at the age of thirty-six.

The majority of Collins' works are distinguished by a pleasing melancholy and a delicate fancy, expressing themselves in smooth and exquisite numbers. Such is the feature in his odes *To Evening*, *To Pity*, *To Simplicity*, *To Mercy*, and *On the Death of Thomson*. Higher qualities, however, are found in his famous *Ode to the Passions*. The personification of the passions is masterly, the different shades of temper are faithfully described, and the music and measure of the verse vary harmoniously with the different changes in the subject.

COWPER.—The life of William Cowper, the son of the Rector of Great Berkhamstead, presents an
B. 1731. instance of great genius wedded to insanity.
D. 1800. His constitution was by nature morbidly sensitive. While he was still a boy at School, a little bully among his playmates terrified him so much that he was obliged to be taken away. When he had reached manhood, his nature was no better fortified. He dawdled away his time in a solicitor's office, tormenting himself with the most sickly fancies. His nomination to the office of Clerk of the Journals to the House of Lords, made him still worse. The very thought of appearing at the bar of that august House to have his qualifications tested, drove him to attempt suicide. And though this attempt failed, his intellect was so deranged that he was lodged in a private mad-house at St Albans. It is true that, after this, a happy change took place in Cowper's mind. He received pardon through Jesus Christ. The peace of God settled down upon his mind, and soothed his troubled faculties. Leaving the asylum, he retired altogether

from active life, and ultimately took up his abode in the rustic parish of Olney. There he composed his poetry, and enjoyed the society of his faithful friend, Mrs Unwin. Yet at intervals the old malady came rolling across his spirit; and he died at last under a deep cloud of melancholy.

Cowper is one of the most delightful of poets. Nothing can be more pleasing than his subjects. A poor wounded fugitive, as he is, he loves to recount the comforts of his refuge. He dwells with fondness upon his garden recreations, his tame hares, his woodland walks, his fireside enjoyments, and his hours of quiet contemplation. If he looks forth, at times, through "the loopholes of retreat," and satirises the worthless pursuits and foolish pleasures of the world, it is only that he may return with deeper thankfulness and keener relish to his snug seclusion. Nor is his execution less delightful than his subjects. There is an utter want of all imitation. *The Task*, his greatest poem, is written in easy, pithy, and sometimes careless, blank verse; and, in his rhyming poems, he studiously avoids the laboured smoothness of Pope. He seems, at all times, to abandon himself to the demands of his subject. As occasion requires, he depicts rural scenes with circumstantial fidelity, satirises men and manners with the most vigorous humour, utters tones of the tenderest sympathy for the distressed poor, and even for the dumb creation; and rises into a strain of fervid and pious thought.

BURNS.—Almost the saddest picture in the whole history of literature is the life of Robert B. 1759. Burns, the son of an Ayrshire peasant. His D. 1796. finely-gifted spirit was fated to struggle into maturity amid the most distracting circumstances. When he was still a mere child he was taken away from school, that his little hands might assist in keeping famine from the family hearth. At the age of sixteen, he was the principal labourer on his father's farm, and was toiling like a galley-slave. His first verses were composed while he was sitting on his

cart or holding the plough-tails. There seemed to be no end to his difficulties; for he failed as a flax-dresser and a farmer; and was, at one time, on the point of becoming a negro-driver in the West Indies. But the greatest misfortunes of Burns began when his poems had brought him into general notice. The aristocracy of Edinburgh took him from the furrow, paraded him in their blazing drawing-rooms as a prodigy, and cast him aside for some new phenomenon. Then, after he had become a farmer and exciseman in Dumfriesshire, certain vulgar sight-seers would not suffer him to prosper. They intruded upon him at all seasons, and enticed him from his duties to the tavern. The result was, that his prospects were utterly wrecked. His affairs became embarrassed; his habits became irregular; a virulent rheumatic fever settled down upon his constitution; and he died at the age of thirty-seven.

Burns was a poet of Nature's own training. He had no need of favourable circumstances to draw out his genius. In those country scenes which others considered mean, vulgar, and prosaic in the extreme, he saw a world of poetry. The rude lives of cottars, their manners, their loves, their toilings a-field, their merry-makings round the winter fire—nay, even the dumb animals which Providence had placed under their protection, kindled his fancy, and filled his large heart with emotion. The inspiration was so vehement, that he was forced to give vent to it in verse. He never faltered for want of a poetical phraseology. His own rugged native dialect was seized without hesitation; and, under the influence of his fervid imagination, it was resolved into a soft, a pliant, a flowing, and a glowing speech. The result was, a series of short poems unequalled for their direct power. His *Tam O'Shanter* and his *Jolly Beggars* are remarkable for their union of some of the most diverse poetical qualities. His *Epistles*, and many of his other poems, abound in faithful and warmly-coloured pictures of low life. His *Songs* give a condensed and thrilling expression to almost every mood in human nature, and rank far above any other lyrics in any country, or in any age of the

world. Yet all these are but the random ebullitions of a mind which, by a sustained effort, might have produced a work worthy to stand among the very greatest master-pieces of literature.

During this period there were many second-rate poets. Of these we may mention Robert Blair, the author of *The Grave*; the well-known Dr Isaac Watts; Mark Akenside, the author of the *Pleasures of the Imagination*; Home, the author of *Douglas*; Macpherson, the translator of *Ossian*; Chatterton, "the marvellous boy;" Churchill, the famous satirist; and Beattie, the author of *The Minstrel*.

PHILOSOPHERS.

BUTLER.—One of the greatest philosophers of modern times was Joseph Butler, a native of Wantage, in Berkshire, and afterwards Bishop of Durham.
B. 1692.
D. 1752.

While discharging his professional duties with great fidelity, he, at the same time, devoted himself to ethical and theological studies. His spirit was truly philosophical; his mind was profound and far-seeing; and he made some of the greatest efforts in the whole history of thought. In his published *Sermons* he propounds what has been generally considered the most comprehensive theory of morals. According to him, human nature consists of a system of propensities, some tending to the good of the individual, others tending to the good of society, but every one distinct from Selfishness on the one hand, and Benevolence on the other. Placed above all these by nature, and having a native right to supremacy, is Conscience. When they obey it, Virtue is the result; when they disobey it, Vice ensues. A still greater work, however, of Butler's, is his far-famed *Analogy*. In it he endeavours to defend religion against the objections of infidels. His reasoning with them is to the following effect. "You admit that God is the Author of Nature, but deny that he is the Author of Revelation. Well! the same difficulties to which you object in Revelation are found in Nature. Revelation has also other features which are similar to

those in Nature. Consequently, while you do not deny that God is the Author of Nature, you cannot deny that God is the Author of Revelation."

SMITH.—As great a philosopher as Butler, in his own line, was Dr Adam Smith, a native of Kirkcaldy, in Fifeshire. His mind, naturally powerful, underwent a thorough system of training while he studied at Glasgow and at Oxford, and while he held the chair of Moral Philosophy in Glasgow, and the office of travelling tutor to the young Duke of Buccleuch. With his faculties matured, and with his stores of information full, he retired to his native town to write his great work, the *Enquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations*. This publication became the foundation of the science of Political Economy, and one of the great stimulants of modern industry. It threw a flood of light upon the nature of trade and commerce; and, in course of time, caused an improvement in the laws and treaties of every civilized nation. Not so successful was his *Theory of Moral Sentiments*. Its greatest blemish is the resolving of all our moral feelings into Sympathy. Its redeeming qualities are, a beautiful style, and a number of interesting illustrations of men and manners.

REID.—Thomas Reid, a native of Kincardineshire, and Moral Philosophy Professor, first at Aberdeen and afterwards at Glasgow, wrote an *Inquiry into the Human Mind*, and *Essays on the Intellectual Powers*, to refute the idealistic theories of Berkeley and Hume. In these works he shews considerable unfitness for purely abstract speculation. His mind has no great metaphysical acuteness. His stock of psychological lore is very small. His thoughts and disquisitions are loosely arranged. At the same time, he often repeats his observations, and not unfrequently contradicts himself. Yet nothing can be more beneficial than the spirit which Reid introduced into Philosophy. He has a healthy suspicion of everything in the shape of a clever theory. It is genius, according

to him, that fills Speculation with error. The sole instrument which he uses is a drudging industry, patiently digging for facts in the depths of consciousness, and arriving at a conclusion only after sober consideration. He is also very careful to test his doctrines in the light of common sense. Consequently, he has become the founder of what is generally known as the Scottish School of Philosophy.

PALEY.—By far the most popular philosopher, however, in this age, was William Paley, a native **B. 1743.** of Peterborough, and a student of Cambridge. **D. 1805.** This able divine had a mind more adapted for the business of active life than for philosophy. Instead of piercing into the hidden nature of things, he was inclined to look simply at their practical tendency. Accordingly, in his *Moral and Political Philosophy*, he could discover no more essential quality in Virtue than Utility, and he could hold up no higher incentive to an upright life, than the hope of everlasting happiness. Yet in his less philosophical works, Paley's abilities appear to greater advantage. His mind has a thorough command over all the materials of the subject on hand, and he urges his reasons with familiar illustrations, and in clear and racy language. In his *Horæ Paulinæ* he constructs a most ingenious argument, from the stray coincidences between *Paul's Epistles* and the *Acts of the Apostles*, to prove that both of these productions are genuine. In the *Evidences of Christianity*, he establishes the truth of the Gospel History by a judicious selection of materials from Butler's *Analogy*, and Lardner's *Credibility*; and in the *Natural Theology*, he gives one of the most interesting statements of the *à posteriori* proof for the existence of a God.

As able as some of these, are certain speculative writers, whose works are not so well known. In the history of thought, there will always be a prominent place for such men as Warburton, the author of the *Divine Legation of Moses*; Jonathan Edwards, the author of the treatise *On the Will*; Hutcheson, the father of Scottish Speculation; Tucker, the author of

the *Light of Nature Revealed* ; and Campbell, the author of an *Essay on Miracles*. It will not be very much out of place to mention here two eminent writers on practical divinity—Dr Blair, the well-known Edinburgh preacher and professor ; and John Newton of Olney, who was such an example of the regenerating grace of God.

HISTORIANS.

HUME.—It would be difficult to find a more even-minded philosopher than David Hume, the son
 B. 1711. of a Scottish laird, and a native of Edinburgh.
 D. 1776. The only thing that disturbed his equanimity was a desire of literary fame ; and to gain this he was willing to deny himself to a reasonable extent. Sooner than become a lawyer or a merchant, he preferred to prosecute his favourite studies on a small patrimony. Accordingly, at his retreat in France, at his brother's mansion of Ninewells near Dunse, at his own house in Edinburgh, and while he was Secretary to British Ambassadors abroad, he continued to compose his philosophical treatises. The public did not seem at first to appreciate his labours, but he never changed his manner, nor slackened his industry. His last work was his *History of England*, written while he held the congenial office of Librarian to the Faculty of Advocates.

"The good David," as he was called, walked through the regions of learning as he walked through life. There is about his manner a deliberate calmness, amounting almost to indifference. It does not trouble him whether he upholds, or knocks down, the public opinion. In his *Dissertation on Morals*, for example, he goes through a long course of searching analysis to prove that the Virtue of actions is nothing else but Utility ; and in his *Enquiry concerning the Human Understanding*, he coolly comes to the conclusion that there is no such thing as Mind. In his *History*, too, the same tendency is apparent. He shews a decided determination to defend the Stuarts, and to vilify the zealots for civil and religious freedom. Yet, both as a

philosopher and as an historian, Hume performed the most important services. His *Dissertation on Morals* brought out into the clearest light the uniform connection between Virtue and Utility. His *Enquiry* shewed that logic, when applied to some of the deepest mysteries of our nature, leads to nothing but absurdity. While his *England*—swarming with Scotticisms and Gallicisms, yet rich in many nameless beauties ; incorrect in minute details, yet sound in great principles ; tinctured with prejudice, yet preserving an air of judicial calmness and impartiality—will always be considered one of the most admirable specimens of historical writing in any language.

ROBERTSON.—A most judicious votary of fame was William Robertson, a native of Borthwick, in Scotland. For several years he continued in his country manse, at Gladsmuir, silently to develop his powers. When the full time had come, in 1759, his *History of Scotland* was launched upon the world with unprecedented results. Congratulations poured in upon him from some of the most eminent men of the time. More substantial honours followed. At the end of a few years he found himself a metropolitan minister, one of her Majesty's Chaplains in Ordinary, Principal of the University of Edinburgh, and Historiographer for Scotland. Nor did he fail to maintain his reputation. After the publication of the *History of Charles V.* and the *History of America*, his title to the very first rank among historians was fully acknowledged. It was now apparent that his facts were carefully collected and skilfully grouped ; that his ideas were expressed with ease, clearness, and dignity ; and that, in forming his conclusions, he was comprehensive, shrewd, and temperate. When occasion called, he was also found to be picturesque, graceful, and pathetic.

GIBBON.—The king, however, of all those great historians, was Edward Gibbon, a native of Putney, in Surrey. The early circumstances of this eminent man's life were rather unfor-

tunate. His health was delicate. His education was desultory. The course of his studies at Oxford was cut short by his conversion to Popery; and, though he abjured the new creed in less than two years, he did not adopt any other in its stead. Yet the nature of Gibbon was instinct with too much pith to trifle long. While he sojourned at Lausanne he began a rigid course of study. On his return to England his researches were directed to history, and all its cognate branches. At length, he resolved to devote himself to some great historical work, and as he sat one evening, amid the ruins of the City of the Cæsars, "while the bare-footed friars were singing vespers in the Temple of Jupiter," the subject of the *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* was suggested. When all the volumes of the work had appeared, the public were astonished at the wide and luminous view that had been placed before them. The author appeared completely at home in that great stretch of ages which he traversed. Geography, military tactics, jurisprudence, philosophy, theology, social life and manners, were all completely under his command. With his potent imagination he summoned up the troubled scenes of the past, in all the accessories and glare and bustle of reality. Armies were seen embroiled on the bloody plain. The palaces and capitals of the East arose, glittering with all the pomp and luxury of "barbaric pearl and gold." Anon there passed kings, heroes, unquiet statesmen, rapt fanatics, grave priests, heavy-browed scholars, pale martyrs,—a varied and imposing train, which dazzled the fancy and overwhelmed the understanding. And all the while, the bearing of the author was worthy of the great panorama, which he was thus raising and guiding. As he described it, his manner was full of enthusiasm. His words burned with fervour, and his sentences rolled on with a sonorous sweep. If his tone changed at all, it was when he was telling of the wonderful improvement which Christianity had effected on the world. Then, indeed, his cold indifference betrayed his infidelity or scepticism. Yet the opinion remained, and still remains, that Gibbon performed his task with

a fulness, an accuracy, and a dramatic effect, which no historian has ever surpassed.

Of the minor historians, it may be sufficient to mention Middleton, the author of the *Life of Cicero*; and Warton, the author of the *History of English Poetry*.

NOVELISTS.

RICHARDSON.—Samuel Richardson, though the son of a poor Derbyshire joiner, was a nursling of fortune. At the sight of his honest, well-favoured face, all difficulties gave way. From the day when he appeared in London, as a printer's apprentice, his success was only a matter of time. Steadily he toiled upward until he had gained a flourishing business of his own, and reached the very top of his profession. Even when he took up his pen to write moral tales, in his arbour at Parson's Green, he was fated by good luck to succeed. He awoke one morning and found that the public had voted him into the first place among novelists, both ancient and modern. Clergymen recommended his works from the pulpit; and his declining years were refreshed by the presence of a perfect flower-garden of admiring ladies.

Richardson's novels are, *Pamela*, *Clarissa Harlowe*, and *Sir Charles Grandison*. They are all written in letters, and are all intended to furnish an example of indomitable virtue. In every case, the plot consists of a protracted series of temptations directed against the hero or heroine. The changes of mind, caused by each successive attack, are described with all the minute accuracy of a psychologist. The only drawback is an utter want of the variety of nature. There is too much sameness, both of scene and of sentiment, and too little of the ever-changing bustle of active life.

FIELDING.—A much more natural novelist was Henry Fielding, a native of Somersetshire, and a grandson of the Earl of Denbigh. This highly-gifted man was little else than a scape-grace. His appetites were keen, and his principles

accommodating. With a wild relish, he drank deep of all the pleasures of life. His wife's fortune, and his own estate, were speedily squandered, and he was plunged into debt. It is true that he settled down to write for the stage, and to compose his incomparable novels, and that, latterly, he acted as one of the justices of Middlesex; but his profligate habits never left him. Weakened by a complication of diseases, the result of a life of excess, he died, at Lisbon, of premature old age.

The experience of Fielding is faithfully represented in his novels of *Joseph Andrews*, *Tom Jones*, *Amelia*, and *Jonathan Wild*. The plots move easily and naturally along, often crossed by unexpected circumstances, but always tending towards one great catastrophe. The characters are sketched exactly as they appeared in life, either in all their amiable purity, or in all their disgusting foulness. Enveloping all, is a cheerful atmosphere of wisdom, wit, and humour. In Fielding's novels, however, there is the greatest of all defects, the want of a moral tone. The author has evidently a great sympathy with some of the most licentious of his characters. Vice is brought forward, not to be branded with disgrace, but to be winked at and laughed at as a thing very common, and therefore very pardonable.

SMOLLETT.—One of the greatest adventurers among modern novelists was Tobias George Smollett, B. 1721. a native of Dumbartonshire, and the descendant of an ancient Scottish family. The life of an apothecary's boy in Glasgow could not content him. He must needs try his luck in London, with nothing in his pocket but an ambitious tragedy, called the *Regicide*. When this production failed to bring him anything, he was thrown upon the world, to earn his bread in what way he might. He became, in succession, a surgeon's mate on board of a war-ship, a medical practitioner at Chelsea, a poet, a pamphleteer, and a critic; and was unfortunate in every capacity. At length, however, Smollett found his true vocation in novel-writing. His roving career had carried him into many a strange

scene. His keen sense of the ludicrous had enabled him to pick up whatever oddities he saw. These he represented with all the bareness of real life in such novels as *Roderick Random*, *Peregrine Pickle*, and *Humphrey Clinker*. The broad farcical humour of these works made them very popular in the author's own time; but on account of their coarse and indecent scenes they have, in a great measure, been condemned in the present day.

One of the most subtle and delicate of all our humorists, but rendered offensive by his capricious manner and his affected sentiment, was Laurence Sterne. The other novelists were, Horace Walpole, the author of the *Castle of Otranto*; Brooke, the author of the *Fool of Quality*; and the Scottish writer, Henry Mackenzie, the author of the *Man of Feeling*.

MISCELLANEOUS WRITERS.

JOHNSON.—By far the most prominent literary man of his time was Samuel Johnson, the son of a
 B. 1709.
 D. 1784. Lichfield bookseller. The early part of this great man's life was spent in the furnace of affliction. His constitution was so diseased that he never lived a single day without pain. His lot was so poor that, when he was a student at Oxford, his bare toes were looking out from his shoes. Then, when he had attained the age of manhood, his great powers and acquirements seemed to be of no use. He failed as an usher at Bosworth, as a bookseller's hack at Birmingham, and as the keeper of a boarding-school near his native town. Driven into London by stern necessity, he found it difficult, as a writer, to obtain food for himself and his wife. For several years he earned the wages of a street-porter; was in the habit of dining on cow-heel in a subterranean cook-shop; and was sometimes compelled, for want of a lodging, to pace the streets all night. Yet Johnson had a gigantic vigour of character; which, in course of time, overcame all these difficulties. By sheer force of merit, his various works attracted notice. George III.

gave him a pension of £300; and the public opinion placed him at the very head of literature. During the last twenty years of his life he lived at ease, the frequent guest of the wealthy, a very dictator in the province of English letters, the centre of a club containing such men as Burke, Gibbon, and Reynolds, and one of the most effective conversationalists whom the world had ever seen.

The range of Johnson's sympathies was very narrow. While moralising, he never descended to the stand-point of an ordinary man of the world, but remained apart, on the heights of philosophy. While criticising, he did not follow his authors into the various by-paths and windings of fancy, but continued to regard them from the beaten way into which custom had led him. It followed, therefore, that he had the one-sided views, and the formal and pompous language of a recluse. Yet within his own confined province, Johnson wrought with striking effect. His thoughts, though beset by prejudices, were shrewd and forcible; and his language, though apt to run into windy antitheses, was always exact, and sometimes sonorously eloquent. In all his works, however defective they may be, there are still many valuable and durable qualities. His best poem, the *Vanity of Human Wishes*, though void of the more delicate graces of poetry, is full of vigorous description and pathetic moralisings. His *English Dictionary*, though miserably defective in its philology, is unrivalled for the precision of its definitions, and the happy selection of its examples. The *Ramblers*, the *Idlers*, and the tale called *Rasselas*, though heavy and monotonous, contain much dignified humour, much serious sentiment, and many pointed remarks on manners and morality. The *Lives of the Poets*, though it is flagrantly unjust to such men as Milton and Gray, surpasses all his other works in lively narrative and natural ease of style.

GOLDSMITH.—Oliver Goldsmith, the son of a clergyman in the county of Longford, was one of those vagrants whom it is impossible to keep in the path of prudence. His friends placed

B. 1728.
D. 1774.

him at Trinity College, Dublin; but he played the buffoon in the class-room, and gave dancing-parties in his chambers. They next sent him to study medicine, first at Edinburgh, and afterwards at Leyden; but, instead of a doctor, he turned out a strolling flute-player. He trudged on foot over a great part of the Continent, earning his bed and board by setting the peasants a dancing; and, in 1756, he appeared in England, without a penny in his pocket, or a single professional idea in his head. Had he not chanced to discover his vein for writing, he might have herded with beggars in the foul alleys of London till the day of his death. It might now have been thought that Goldsmith's condition was improved. The booksellers gave him abundance of employment. Such men as Johnson, Burke, and Reynolds, became his warm friends. A bright prospect of fame was also opening up before him. Yet nothing could save him from the doom of a simpleton. Gamblers swindled him out of large sums; impudent mendicants wrung from him his remaining coins; and his love of finery and gaiety tempted him to run up large accounts. Laden with a debt of £2000, and seeing no hope of release, he sank into a fever, and died in his forty-sixth year.

As Goldsmith appeared in life, so does he appear in his writings. He never takes a deep and comprehensive view of any subject. His histories are sketchy; his tales and comedies catch little else than the humours of life; and his poems are seldom all of a piece. Yet his genius has a most exquisite taste and tact. How delicately he passes over those of his materials that are coarse and dry! How lovingly he selects those that are beautiful and interesting! If they are few, how much does he make of them! He arranges them in the most picturesque groups. He describes them in language simple and lucid. He sheds around them the hues of his fancy, sometimes cheerful, sometimes sombre, but always natural and always pleasing. Are not his histories of England, Rome, and Greece, as incorrect, and, at the same time, as fascinating, as any historical romance? What other author could have conjured up the fresh rustic atmosphere that pervades his novel *The*

Vicar of Wakefield, and the comedy of *She Stoops to Conquer*? Who ever lingered over more entrancing bosom-scenes than those which appear in his poems of *The Traveller*, and *The Deserted Village*? Truly did Johnson say "he touched nothing which he did not beautify."

BURKE.—The most gigantic man of that age was Edmund Burke, a native of Dublin. After
B. 1730. his education at Trinity College, he was found
D. 1797. in London, pushing his fortune with the energy of a Titan. He was the most indefatigable of all hack writers. He was the most insatiable of all students. Of all the talkers, too, who frequented the Turk's Head, he alone was considered dexterous enough to throw back the ball to old Samuel Johnson. It was not, however, till Burke had obtained a seat in Parliament, through the influence of the Marquis of Rockingham, that his great nature appeared in its full dimensions. His mind was at once comprehensive and penetrating; his capacious memory was stored with rich spoils from every province of learning; his imagination was prolific of the grandest similitudes; and his diction glowed with all the varied hues of fancy, humour, and irony. When all these powers were brought into play the effect was almost the ideal of oratory. The only qualities that could be said to be wanting were fiery declamation, and close and rapid reasoning. Had his audience been worthy of him, he would have been the most overwhelming of orators. As it was, he has left behind him, in the shape of his *Speeches*, the grandest specimens of eloquence and political wisdom which any age has produced.

BOSWELL.—An unexpected light of the age appeared in the person of James Boswell, the heir of
B. 1740. Auchinleck, in Ayrshire, and a lawyer at the
D. 1795. Parliament House in Edinburgh. Glutton, mountebank, and coxcomb, though he was, there was a true spark of hero-worship glowing within him. The uncouth Dr Johnson was his idol. That philosopher's

dingy house in Bolt Court was his temple. Thither, as soon as the recess in Edinburgh began, it was his wont to make pilgrimages of devotion. He watched with loving attention the old doctor's appearance, manners, and environment. He followed him about from place to place, leading him to talk on interesting subjects, drinking in his clear and vigorous sentences, and sitting up for whole nights to write out what had been noted. The consequence was, that he produced a biography of Johnson, which has universally been considered the most complete representation of a man that was ever written. By it we are enabled to place ourselves among the shadows of that past age. We can see the shabby, lumbering, old sage, rocking his huge bulk in the chair, blinking, and holding his head awry. We can hear him contradicting, brow-beating, and talking-down every one who dared to venture an opinion. Above all, we can listen as he utters those sonorous bursts of wit and wisdom, which are now considered more valuable than his published writings themselves.

As popular miscellaneous writers in their own day, we can merely mention the author of *Junius' Letters*; Benjamin Franklin, the great American philosopher; Earl of Chesterfield, author of *Letters to my Son*; and Lord Chatham, the great parliamentary orator. This may also be the place to note such comic dramatists as Garrick, the great actor; Foote the celebrated mimic; and Richard Brinsley Sheridan, the author of the *School for Scandal*.

EIGHTH PERIOD.

FIRST AGE OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY.

1800-1830.

Characteristic:—Powerful and varied activity in all departments of Literature.

Impulse of the French Revolution—Elevation of the Lower Classes of Society—Earnest spirit of Authors—New and striking Forms of Literature.

POETS:—*Wordsworth—Coleridge—Southey—Campbell—Byron—Shelley—Other Poets.*

NOVELISTS:—*Scott—Other Novelists.*

MISCELLANEOUS WRITERS:—*Jeffrey—Lamb—Hazlitt—Wilson—Other Writers.*

HISTORIANS:—*M'Crie—Hallam—Other Historians.*

DIVINES:—*Foster—Hall—Chalmers—Other Divines.*

PHILOSOPHERS:—*Stewart—Brown—Mackintosh.*

THE French Revolution stirred the public feelings as if with a series of electric shocks. The protracted struggle which this country waged, single-handed, against the tyranny of Bonaparte sustained the excitement. Larger and more earnest views of the rights of the individual began to be upheld. It was emphatically the age of social and philanthropical schemes. That the lower classes might be elevated, the Press was brought into more active play. That the press might supply the increasing wants of the public mind, the multitudinous and herculean powers of the Steam-engine were enlisted. Books were multiplied with a velocity beyond all precedent; floods of knowledge inundated even the remotest provincial town; and a wide and varied field of influence was opened up to living authors.

Nor were the authors slack in cultivating this field. They were the mouth-pieces of the age; and those very causes which electrified society, inspired them. They addressed themselves to their work with a straightforward intensity which had never been known before. Hence it was, that literature assumed new and striking forms. Novel-writing, in the hands of Scott, borrowed materials from history to add to her native charms. Criticism established a regular judicial court; and the first professional judge appeared in the shape of the *Edinburgh Review*. Periodicals derived a mighty element of power from the long, elaborate, and brilliant articles which eminent authors now began to publish in their pages. Poetry, especially, flourished with a strength and luxuriance which had never been seen since the Elizabethan age. The number of great poets was unusually large; each had a style of his own; and they all wrote with the natural and overflowing fervour of genius.

POETS.

WORDSWORTH.—Nature placed William Wordsworth in circumstances very favourable for
 B. 1770. making him her own poet. At his native vil-
 D. 1850. lage of Cockermouth, in Cumberland, he saw the mountain region in the distance mingling with the sky. At Hawkshead, where he was schooled, he lived face to face with all the entrancing forms of romantic scenery. When he was at St John's College, Cambridge, he did not distort his fine powers by intellectual wranglings, but silently developed his poetical genius. Then, during a vacation-time, away he travelled, to expand his soul in the sublime presence of the Alps. But it was not until he had attained the age of manhood that nature found an opportunity of claiming Wordsworth entirely as her own. A young friend dying, left him a legacy; part of a debt which the Earl of Lonsdale had owed his father was paid to him; and he was made independent. Nothing remained for him now but to seek some sequestered nook where he might abandon

himself to the sweet and melodious current of his thoughts. The spot which he chose was a white cottage in the valleys of Westmoreland. There, under the shadow of the eternal hills, and within sight of the gleaming Rydal Lake, he felt himself in the solemn temple of nature. Gradually the quiet around him took possession of his soul, and all his faculties settled down into the serene calm of contemplation. Day after day, in the flushing summer and in the black funereal winter, he was out amid the hush of the mountains, listening to the mysterious harmonies of the universe. Year after year, in the face of derision from many detractors, he continued to strike a loftier key, and to aspire to a more ambitious strain. Many of those sublime *Sonnets*, which stand unsurpassed in the language, were the results of his riper years; and, at his death, he left unfinished a stupendous design, which, taking in the *Prelude* and the *Excursion*, was intended to illustrate the growth of a poet's mind.

The attitude of Wordsworth is that of a devout worshipper. As he walks under the dome of the sky, he feels that he is in the dwelling-place of an all-pervading spirit of beauty and beneficence. Every object that he sees is sacred in his eyes. The creeping mist and the marching army of clouds, the lowly hut and the towering architecture of the hills, the wayside beggar and the high-souled philosopher, are all alike beautiful, and all alike morally significant. Even the meanest flower that blows, gives "thoughts that often lie too deep for tears." With such an absorbing emotion, Wordsworth needs not the stimulants of ordinary poets. Stock phrases and metaphors he rejects as false and feeble. His inspiration is caught directly from the face and voice of nature herself. So lovingly does he linger over an object, that he cannot fail to give its description and its lesson faithfully and vividly. Sometimes his pictures are exquisitely simple and graceful, like the mountain flowerets of which he is so fond. Sometimes they are severely beautiful and grand, like the naked midnight heavens.

COLERIDGE.—While still a mere child, Samuel Taylor Coleridge lost his father, the Vicar of Ottery St Mary, Devonshire, and was sent to Christ's Hospital, London. There the lubberly blue-coated urchin was father of the dreaming philosopher. From the age of eight, he was a perfect literary glutton. All the books in a neighbouring circulating library were devoured. Even metaphysics were not too strong for his appetite; and many a visitor to the cloisters stood, and listened to the round-faced charity-boy retailing to his companions the theories on which his soul had feasted. It was also seen at an early age, how imprudent Coleridge was. Though the head scholar, and entitled to an exhibition to Jesus' College, Cambridge, he was on the eve of apprenticing himself to a cobbler. And when he did go to the University, he did not apply himself to any professional studies. His mind became warped with a complicated tissue of notions about Unitarianism; metaphysics, and liberty. In this state of infatuation, he offended the College authorities by avowing his sympathies with the French Revolution. The result was, that in a few weeks, the disgraced student was an awkward raw recruit in a regiment of Dragoons, unable either to sit his horse or to rub him down. He continued for four months to be the laughing-stock of the barrack-yards, until his friends found him out, and bought him off. It was not, however, till he had reached the maturity of manhood that Coleridge's utter want of all practical talent became manifest. The flabby irresolute dream was not at home upon this hard earth. He seemed to have dropped by accident from some limbo of visionaries. The simple ways of life bewildered him, and severe facts were constantly running through his finely-spun theories. He planned a beautiful model of a Republic, to be established on the banks of the Susquehanna, and abandoned it for want of money. He started a periodical, called *The Watchman*, and, before the tenth number, found himself landed in debt. He went out to Malta as secretary to the Governor, and retained his post only for nine months. Tired, at length,

of battling with the world, he threw himself and his family, in a great measure, upon his friends; and he became the most magnificent of idlers. Gorgeous theorising was now all his occupation. When his imagination flagged, he fed it with opium. When the horrors of remorse ensued, he sought refuge in the endless mazes of German speculation. His laxity of purpose increased until all his great powers began to evaporate in mere talk. For the last nineteen years of his life, he sat in his friend Mr Gillman's house, on Highgate Hill, the greatest literary oracle of the age, sending forth an uninterrupted flood of responses, which were sometimes dark and enigmatical; and which, at other times, flashed with the true light of inspiration.

Coleridge, of all men of his age, might have raised the grandest trophy. His mind was keen and far-searching. At his command, lay materials levied from the richest provinces of learning. There were scientific facts, German speculations, thoughts from the schoolmen, Platonic ideas, and all the bewitching phrases and imagery of poetry. Omnipotent, too, was his power of combining these in new creations. Colossal theories and most entrancing poetical forms were constantly rising up before his mind; and, like Milton's Pandemonium, they rose to the ever-changing music and dulcet symphonies of his own wondrous eloquence. Yet Coleridge's actual works are but a splendid collection of fragments; and remind us of some regal city suddenly checked while in the act of springing into existence. His poetry, sometimes massive and imposing, at other times, light, airy, and romantic, is like a Gothic Cathedral, with some of its aisles left unfinished. His occasional criticisms resemble a gallery of noble statues of the great, with part of the figures still in rude outline. Nor are his philosophical theories unlike imperfect bridges stretching across an abyss. Their foundations are stable, and their buttresses solid, but when we view them against the light of heaven, we see yawning gaps in their arches that have never been filled up.

Among Coleridge's poems, the most famous are, his *Ancient Mariner*, full of weird pageantry; and his ro-

mance of *Christabel*, noted for its dream-like forms and figures, and its strains of "linked sweetness." The most valuable, perhaps, of his prose works, are his *Lectures on Shakspeare and some of the Old Poets and Dramatists*.

SOUTHEY.—Wordsworth and Coleridge, on account of their connection with the romantic scenery in the North of England, were generally classed together as the "Lake Poets." The other member of that class was Robert Southey, the son of a Bristol linen-draper. From his early years this great man had a most active and ambitious mind. While at Oxford he plunged into Unitarian and Republican opinions. After he left college, his whole soul was given to his friend Coleridge's vagary about the Susquehanna Republic. When that bubble melted into thin air, he became the most voluminous of authors. Numerous verses flowed from his pen; he could not sojourn for six months in the Peninsula without publishing *Letters from Spain and Portugal*; and while he was studying law in London, his evenings were devoted to an ambitious epic named *Madoc*. At length, in 1804, Southey settled at Greta, near Keswick; and from that time became a consummate literary workman. His library was really a work-shop. From morning to night he was in it labouring. Every hour had its own particular task. At the same time, whatever was done was done in a business-like manner. When he wanted materials, his memory was ready with a large store of historical, critical, and antiquarian knowledge. If that failed, he had a most extensive and well-assorted library to consult. Work after work, admirably planned and finished, proceeded in regular march from his study. Of poetry, there were *The Curse of Kehama*, *Roderick the Last of the Goths*, *The Vision of Judgment*, and many less important pieces. Of prose, there were the *Life of Lord Nelson*, *Lives of the British Admirals*, *Lives of Oliver Cromwell and John Bunyan*, *Life of John Wesley*, *History of the Peninsular War*; and essays and papers without number. So habitual, in

fact, had industry become, that his labour of love was converted into a love of labour. It was not until a fatal paralysis had affected his brain that he laid down his pen, and, for the rest of his life, sat in an idle stupor among his beloved books.

Truly did Coleridge say of Southey, that he possessed "the best gifts of talent and genius, free from all their characteristic defects." Throughout all his works he shews great power, combined with a sound sense of propriety. In prose, his style is both easy and classic, and his reflections both just and original. In his epics, too, he works in accordance with a lofty and judicious theory of poetic art. The plots are consistent and symmetrical. The details and allusions are historically accurate. The descriptions, though not very grand, are effective and picturesque. The only great defect is, that the execution is not so powerful as to excite, in an English mind, any sympathy with tales so foreign and so strange. Greater, however, than all the rest of Southey's works, are his stray poems. *The Idiot*, *Lord William*, *The Inchcape Bell*, *Mary the Maid of the Inn*, and *The Old Woman of Berkeley*, seem perfect models of ballads. The story in each aims at bringing out one great event, and at teaching one great lesson. Important incidents stand out in picturesque prominence. The style runs on, easy, vivid, and often pleasingly quaint. At the same time, over all broods an atmosphere of romance, inspiring a feeling of weird suspense.

CAMPBELL.—Thomas Campbell was a native of Glasgow, and a student of the University in that city. His feeling was pure and delicate, and his fancy was happy and original. Every one of his productions was appreciated as soon as it appeared. The translation from *Aristophanes*, that he gave in at College, was pronounced to be the best the Professor had ever seen. The *Pleasures of Hope*, which he wrote in Edinburgh, placed him, at the age of twenty-two, among the best poets. The spirited lyrics which he published after his return from the

Continent, were declared to be national, and were rewarded with a government pension. The same success attended his miscellaneous writings when he had fixed his abode in London. His *Specimens of the British Poets* have always been considered to contain some of the most exquisite and most appreciative pieces of criticism in the language. It was only in his later poems that the merits of Campbell failed in producing any great effect. Such poems as *Gertrude of Wyoming*, *Theodric*, and *O'Connor's Child*, sweet and beautiful though they were, appeared tame in contrast with the stirring poetical narratives of Scott and Byron. Yet Campbell received a place among the English classics; and when he died he was buried in Westminster Abbey.

The great defect of Campbell's poetry is a want of strength of imagination. In the *Pleasures of Hope* the feeble plan and the frequent vague ideas were only concealed by his enthusiastic tone and redundant diction. When advancing years had subdued this enthusiasm, and improving taste had pruned this redundancy, his defect became more manifest. In *Gertrude*, for example, all the deliciousness of the style and the fancy could not atone for the insipidity of the plot and the characters. The only pieces that were really great were his short odes; and they were great *because* they were short. 'They were the outbursts of a fitful rapture, and not the easy efforts of a potent imagination.

BYRON.—A spoiled child of fortune was George Gordon Byron, a native of London. At first
 B. 1718. his life seemed the very path of prosperity.
 D. 1824. He succeeded to a lordship when only eleven. The venerable Newstead Abbey, with all its wooded acres, became his property. At the school of Harrow and at the University of Cambridge, he tasted all the indulgences fit for a minion of fortune. Then, when he became an author, he entered the domains of literature as a conqueror. The failure of his *Hours of Idleness* was only a temporary check. No sooner had he sent forth the first two cantos of his *Childe Harold* than the mind of the nation was taken captive. The *Giaour*,

the *Bride of Abydos*, the *Corsair*, and *Lara*, completed the triumph. At the age of twenty-six he was seated on the throne of literature; the jewelled creatures of fashion were prostrate at his feet; and all the moist-eyed sentimentalists in the kingdom were looking up to him as the representative of genius. Yet amid all this pageant of success, Byron was the most hapless of men. He had given the rein to all his bad passions; and they now hurried him into perplexity. His wife, in indignation, left him a year after their marriage. That very society that had made him an idol, threw him insolently away. Hooted and maligned, he fled from England to complete his ruin in Italy. He burnt up his strength with fiery liquors, and brought on premature old age. Nay, he debased his very genius by writing some tragedies which were daring and blasphemous, and a poem which came out like a blot upon the English language. The only part of his life that became him was the closing scene. He was in the act of aiding, with advice and money, the Greek patriots, when a fever cut him off at Missolonghi.

Byron is one of the most powerful of poets. How vigorously his mind grasps the prominent features in a scene; and with what a pomp of rhyme and rhetoric he rolls his ideas forth! Yet the world represented in his poetry is not the genial world of God. It is more like the region of despair. The scenery, grand and beautiful though it be, tells us only of the insignificance, the hopeless wretchedness, and the death of man. Almost all the characters, even in the tragedies, are blighted beings. Under their diverse garbs we detect the same misanthropical scowl and scorn. Some mysterious grief preys on their very hearts; and they are sick of life. Nor is it their wickedness that is the cause of their misery. They are wretched, because they have a lofty soul, a desperate courage, and generous emotions.

SHELLEY.—Not unlike Byron in his fate was Percy Bysshe Shelley, the eldest son of a Sussex Baronet. His finely-strung spirit was roughly handled. The authorities of Oxford expelled

B. 1792.
D. 1832.

him for Atheism. His father disowned him for an imprudent marriage. Then his wife and he separated; and he was deprived of the care of his children by a decree of the Court of Chancery. Thus repeatedly buffeted, Shelley's unearthly and fairy-like genius became scared and irritated. The bluff opinions and strict conventionalities of English life grew odious to him, and he emigrated to Italy. There, as he loitered amid the embowered ruins of ancient temples, or lay on his back in his floating skiff, he conjured up hazy dreams about intellectual beauty, about universal love, about a divine spirit pervading every object, and about the possibility of man purifying his soul by the exercise of his will. These ideas he strove laboriously to illustrate in poem after poem, lavishing upon them all those brilliant colours which he had borrowed from nature's own living garniture. The day of truth had not yet dawned upon this unhappy dreamer, when he was drowned in the bay of Spezzia.

The larger works of Shelley are *Queen Mab*, *Alastor*, *The Revolt of Islam*, a classic drama called *Prometheus Unbound*, and a tragedy called the *Cenci*. But his most popular pieces are his odes to the *Cloud* and the *Skylark*.

There are three poets, each of whom had certain poetical faculties in great perfection. George Crabbe, the poet of the real world, described village scenes with stern fidelity. The short-lived Keats, the poet of the ideal world, lost himself in his own luxuriant imaginings. Thomas Moore, the poet of fashionable parties, was sparkling all over with that brilliant play of fancy which may be seen in his *Irish Melodies*.

There were other writers of verse, who were worthy to be the contemporaries of the great poets of this age, and who would have occupied a very prominent place in almost any other period. William Gifford and Dr John Wolcot are coarse but clever satirists. James Grahame, the author of *The Sabbath*, and Robert Pollok, the author of the *Course of Time*, are impressive but magniloquent in their religious musings. The hymns of Mrs Hemans, Bishop Heber, and Keble, com-

mend themselves to all. *The Pleasures of Memory*, by Samuel Rogers, is instinct with classic grace and delicate sentiment; the *Sonnets* of William Lisle Bowles have the honour of having first inspired Coleridge; and the *Skylark* of James Hogg, "The Ettrick Shepherd," is a wild and sweet carol, redolent of the heathery moors.

NOVELISTS.

SCOTT.—The greatest of all novelists was Walter Scott, who was born in Edinburgh, and educated at the High School and University of that city. From his earliest youth, his spirit was robust and genial. All the scenes of life, especially those of a past age, were regarded by him with intense relish. At every opportunity he devoured Gothic romances, and drank in traditional border-ballads. There was no difference when he grew up and became an advocate. While his body was pacing the floor of the Parliament House, his spirit was away among his favourite pursuits; and no sooner had the recess come round, than off he went, with staff in hand, "on a raid" (as he called it), into the Border counties, invading every moorland farm, and seizing upon every feature of character, picking up every floating catch of song, and returning with a large booty of materials for future use. It was after Scott had married, and had been appointed Sheriff of Selkirk, that he fairly entered upon his labours as an author. At the retired farmhouse of Ashestiel, on the Tweed, he began to write metrical romances in fiery racing verse of eight syllables. Those readers who had been accustomed to the drivel of poets like Hayley, were startled as if with a war-trumpet. It seemed that the stirring ages of feud and chivalry were starting into life again. Brawny hirsute chieftains, and stalwart harnessed knights, rose before them in all the roughness of reality. As *Marmion* and *The Lady of the Lake* continued the series which the *Lay of the Last Minstrel* had begun, the people were spell-bound, and declared him one of

the greatest of living poets. It is true, that they were afterwards drawn away by the more daring genius of Byron; but, with a more potent charm, the Magician drew them back again. In his *Waverley Novels*, he began to open up wider and more varied views of life. He revived the heroes of the past, introduced among them imaginary characters, and thus created a new world of enchantment. The effect was unprecedented. All Europe waited in suspense for his volumes, and a princely fortune flowed into his hands. A new kind of ambition, however, had been springing up in the mind of Scott. Nothing would content him but to become a country laird, and found a family. He bought a bare piece of Selkirkshire, on the Tweed, and added to it farm after farm. Woods were planted; a large Gothic edifice was built; and the rooms were filled with sumptuous and antique furniture. The estate was named Abbotsford, and the owner was made a Baronet. It seemed that his dream of ambition was about to be realised. Yet misfortune, like a thunderbolt, burst over the head of Scott. To meet his immense expenditure, he had been receiving bills instead of payment from his publishers, and had also become a secret partner in the firm. In 1826 the firm went down; and, at fifty-five, he found himself not only penniless, but burthened with a debt of £117,000. Stunned, yet resolute, he sat down to remove this crushing load with no other instrument but his pen. For six years he drudged on, in the midst of family bereavements and decaying faculties; and, just when he had almost freed himself, an attack of paralysis laid him prostrate for ever.

The *Waverley Novels* of Scott are rudely grand, like his own native mountains. The plots are abrupt and irregular. The language is loose, redundant, and unpolished. Yet over all these hangs an air of robust reality. The incidents are well-fitted to call all the human sympathies into healthy play. The scenery is dashed off in a broad and effective style. All the personages stand out in palpable relief. His Scottish characters, in particular, are redolent of all the humours and unction of reality. Bailie Nicol Jarvie, Dominie

Sampson, Dandie Dinmont, Edie Ochiltree, Jonathan Oldbuck, Dugald Dalgetty, Meg Merrilees, Jeanie Deans, Madge Wildfire, and Meg Dods, have a local habitation and an existence in the memory of every reader.

There were several novelists in this age who had preceded Sir Walter Scott. Godwin had published his thrilling tale of *Caleb Williams*, to inculcate his peculiar social opinions; Miss Austen had given her natural representations of the middle and higher classes of society; and Miss Edgeworth had delighted sensible novel-readers by her practical and unromantic views of Irish life. But after the appearance of *Waverley*, novelists sprung up faster than ever. Of these the most eminent were Hamilton, the author of *Cyril Thornton*; Lady Morgan, the narrator of lively and humorous Irish Tales; Mrs Shelley, the conjurer of that wild and awful romance of *Frankenstein*; John Galt, the writer of *Annals of the Parish*; and the brilliant and witty Theodore Hook.

MISCELLANEOUS WRITERS.

JEFFREY.—Francis Jeffrey was a native of Edinburgh, and a pupil of the High School of that city. From his boyhood, his mind was active and versatile. His studies at Glasgow and Oxford, and the duties of an advocate at Edinburgh, did not engross his attention. Literature was the favourite pursuit of every leisure hour. He composed verses, and dreamed that one day he would be a great poet. He also exercised himself in criticising authors, and in writing papers on a great variety of subjects. Accordingly, in 1802, he felt himself well-prepared to take an active part in the establishment of the *Edinburgh Review*. The rise of that periodical was singular. Some patriotic young Whigs sat one day in Jeffrey's residence, in Buccleuch Place, lamenting the enslaved state of public opinion. It was agreed to start a publication which should afford a free vent to literary, social and political ideas. Henry Brougham, Francis

Horner, Sidney Smith, and other growing Titans, began to try their young strength in its pages; and Jeffrey became both the leading contributor, and the editor. It supplied a want which the public had long felt, and it was successful, beyond the most sanguine hopes of its projectors. The establishment of the rival *Quarterly Review*, in 1809, did not affect it much; and in 1829, when Jeffrey ceased to be its conductor, it was still regarded, by a great portion of the people, as the chief literary oracle. Jeffrey's industrious youth and manhood were followed by an honoured old age. His fame at the Bar had been rapidly increasing. Within a few years he was made Dean of Faculty, Lord Advocate, M. P. for Edinburgh, and, at length, one of the Judges of the Court of Session. His villa of Craigcrook, nestling in a wooded hollow at the foot of Corstorphine Hill, became the abode of elegant amusement and enlightened conversation. Young authors regarded him as the dispenser of literary reputation; and when he died his townsmen erected a monument to his memory.

Of a certain kind of literature, Lord Jeffrey was a great critic. His mind was alive to every truth. His logic was dexterous in detecting every error. Where there was any beauty, his delicate sympathy felt it. Where there was any absurdity, his ready wit covered it with ridicule. At the same time, whatever he said, he said with grace and effect. The flow of his language was natural, brisk, and copious. His memory was always ready with varied information, and his fancy with happy and even beautiful illustrations. Yet there was a kind of literature in which Jeffrey was completely at fault. For example, he could not appreciate the severe beauties of such a writer as Wordsworth. The apparent trivialities of that great poet puzzled his critical sense, and he lavished witty abuse upon pieces which have since been ranked among the great works of the age. Jeffrey's *Contributions to the Edinburgh Review*, including a celebrated *Essay on Beauty*, have been published separately.

LAMB.—Charles Lamb was a thorough-bred Lon-

doner. He was born in the Temple. His boyhood was passed in the cloisters of Christ's Hospital School. During the greater part of his life he sat at a desk in the India House, and lodged in the very heart of the City. The glare of the shops on a winter night, delighted him more than all the sunsets among the mountains. At the sight of the tide of life in Fleet Street, he was ready to weep tears of joy; and when he was spending his last days in the quiet village of Enfield, he sighed for the hubbub of the mighty Babylon.

A similar one-sided attachment was visible in Lamb's literary life. Old English authors were his study by the evening fire. His tragedy of *John Woodvil* was written in the style of the old dramatists. One of his best known works is *Specimens* from the old dramatists. His famous *Essays by Elia*, too, are quaint and familiar. In them, he resembles a gentle-hearted and clear-headed elderly man, gossiping away the quiet eventide of life. He loves to call up the forms of his old acquaintances, to dwell upon their peculiarities, and to throw around him the mellow light of his grotesque humour and subtle wit.

HAZLITT.—William Hazlitt was born at Maidstone, and educated at the Unitarian College of Hackney. The life of this brilliant essayist was one of varied endeavour. Theology, which he studied at Hackney, he disliked. Painting, although he visited the great continental galleries, was too difficult. Even when he fell back upon Literature, it was with great exertion that he could maintain his expensive habits. He wrote such original works as *Principles of Human Action*, *Spirit of the Age*, and *Characters of Shakspeare's Plays*; he lectured on Poetry and Philosophy; and he contributed papers to the *Examiner*, the *Edinburgh Review*, and the *Encyclopædia Britannica*. His last, and most elaborate, work was the *Life of Napoleon*. Hazlitt had a broad and a deep nature. Among the old English writers he was especially at home. Whenever his stubborn prejudices allowed him,

he sympathised with their profound passion, grasped their grand ideas, and expounded their significance with great ingenuity and force of genius.

WILSON.—One of the greatest of our miscellaneous writers was John Wilson, a native of Paisley, and a student of Glasgow and Oxford. During his early career, this wonderful man found himself in a poet's paradise. He was in affluent circumstances. He lived on his fairy estate of Elleray, by romantic Windermere. Those ethereal spirits, Coleridge and Wordsworth, were his frequent companions. His form was radiant with manly beauty, and developed by every manly exercise. His genius was robust and buoyant, and revelled in all the glories of the creation. He was also beginning to utter the inner voice of his soul in those sweetly pathetic verses which we find in the *Isle of Palms* and the *City of the Plague*. It was evident, as Scott remarked, that he required only steadiness of purpose to make him the first man of the age. But it was not until Wilson had been established in Edinburgh, as Professor of Moral Philosophy, that all his varied powers appeared in their greatness. As the chief writer in *Blackwood's Magazine*, he then introduced the very hey-day of periodical writing. He abandoned himself to the task, and, within the narrow confines of a monthly paper, shewed all the prodigal energies of an intellectual giant. Number after number contained simple and affecting Scottish tales, or shrewd and witty political papers, or unexampled floods of spontaneous poetry, or criticisms which entered into the very soul of the authors under review. Above all, there appeared the *Noctes Ambrosianæ*, an account of imaginary festive meetings between Wilson, under the name of "Christopher North;" Hogg, under the name of "the Shepherd;" and several other interlocutors. These papers in fact, were themselves the meeting of all the multifarious faculties of the author's mind. His strong sense, his lofty imagination, his exuberant fancy, his rampant wit, his uproarious humour, were all let loose and assembled together; and, feasting on every possible

variety of subject, commingled in a hilarious and tumultuous revel which startled the whole literary world. Till within a short time of his death, the noble figure of Professor Wilson, as he walked through the streets, was one of the wonders of Edinburgh.

HISTORIANS.

M'CRIE.—Thomas M'Crie was born at Dunse, and studied at the University of Edinburgh.
B. 1772. While an Anti-burgher minister in that city,
D. 1835. he quietly developed his peculiar talents. He acquired the chief modern languages. He entered deeply into the annals of the Scottish Reformation. His faculty for historical portraiture was also trained by the writing of several biographies for religious periodicals. At length, as the subject of a large work, he chose the *Life of John Knox*. His execution of this important task was thorough. All the original sources of information were carefully explored. The biographical facts, and all the details of contemporaneous history, were combined with great imaginative power. When any controverted point occurred, it was calmly and ably discussed. The general result was decisive. The prejudice which represented Knox as an illiterate and a ruthless fanatic, was refuted; his character as an enlightened and undaunted champion of civil and religious freedom, was vindicated; and the healthy constitution, and honourable lineage of that Church of which he was the ancestor, were made manifest. After the publication of *Knox's Life*, in 1813, the merit of M'Crie was universally acknowledged. The *Edinburgh Review* declared him the best historian that had appeared since its establishment; the Edinburgh University made him a D.D.; his own sect appointed him a Professor; and, at his death, the General Assembly of the Established Church, then sitting, sent a deputation to tender their sympathy to his bereaved relatives. Dr M'Crie also wrote a *Life of Andrew Melville*, forming a continuation of the *Life of Knox*.

HALLAM.—The greatest historian of the period, however, was Henry Hallam, the son of the Dean of Wells, and a student of Eton and Oxford.

B. 1778.
D. 1859. His life was devoted to study. When he was not writing for the *Edinburgh Review*, his mind was patiently exploring the wide field of European History and Literature. The results appeared in the shape of those great works, entitled *Europe during the Middle Ages*, *The Constitutional History of England*, and *Introduction to the Literature of Europe*. In all these, the learning is singularly accurate and extensive, the judgments are founded on a calm and philosophical scrutiny, and the style moves on, chaste, grave, dignified, and sometimes even deigning to put on a rhetorical ornament.

Many of the minor historians of this period are noted for their accurate research. William Mitford has given us the *History of Greece* from an anti-democratic point of view. Dr John Lingard, a priest, has given us the *History of England* from a Roman Catholic point of view. Sir Francis Palgrave has written a *History of the Anglo-Saxons*. George Chalmers and John Pinkerton have employed much antiquarian lore to illustrate the early annals of Scotland. From William Roscoe we have biographies of *Lorenzo de Medici* and *Leo X.*; and from Patrick Fraser Tytler, a *Universal History*, a *History of Scotland*, and a *Life of Raleigh*.

THEOLOGICIANS.

HALL.—One of the intensest minds of the age was that of Robert Hall, a native of the village of Arnsby, near Leicester. At the University of Aberdeen he was a keen student of mental science. His ardour only increased when he became a Baptist preacher. At Cambridge and at Leicester, where he was stationed in succession, he carefully prepared several pamphlets and sermons for the press; and he also subjected his mind to a severe course of abstract study. So overstrained, indeed, was his brain, that it twice became deranged, and it was only after the most

judicious treatment that its sanity was restored. At the same time, however, Robert Hall was one of the noblest of orators. His attitude in the pulpit was full of unstudied grandeur. As he stood there, the chief features of his topic rose up, large and distinct, within his mind; crowds of facts, from his matured knowledge, rushed to their support; and all the details drew themselves up in lucid array. The subject seemed to fill and dilate and inspire his whole being. His ideas poured forth, orderly, distinct, and vivid. His language rolled onward in an unbroken flood, and caught fire, and kindled and blazed as it rolled. The torrent of eloquence was too strong for the preacher himself. Onward he was borne, all unconscious of his audience, veering neither to the right nor to the left, and never bating his speed until he bore down with overwhelming force upon the conclusion of his high argument. Owing to his fastidious correction, the fervour that Hall's sermons shewed when they were delivered from the pulpit, was considerably cooled down when they came to be published. The most celebrated are those *On Modern Infidelity*; *On War*; *Sentiments proper to the Present Crisis* (of 1803); and *On the Death of the Princess Charlotte*.

FOSTER.—Another great member of the Baptist community was John Foster, who was born at B. 1770. a farm near Halifax, and was at one time a D. 1843. weaver. Unlike Hall, he failed as a preacher. His first charge, at Chichester, he left of his own accord. His second, at Frome, he was compelled, by bodily infirmity, to resign. After a retirement of eleven years, he again accepted a church near Bristol, and, after a trial of two months, he was so depreciated, that he again sought private life. The greater part of his career, was, therefore, devoted to literature generally, and especially to contributions for *The Eclectic Review*.

Foster's Essays are an intellectual region of great fertility. He took a comprehensive view of any field of enquiry which he happened to enter. Thither he assembled crowds of facts from the most diverse provinces

of learning. To these he added shrewd observations, profound conceptions, and original images, from his own large mind. The throng of ideas which he thus gathered round him was sometimes so great as to encumber him. He only caught a glimpse of some of his materials; and his style, which was generally vigorous and striking, occasionally became vague and redundant.

CHALMERS.—Thomas Chalmers, who was born at Anstruther, and who studied at St Andrews, B. 1780. was a veritable king of men. His massive and D. 1847. strongly marked countenance was full of slumbering power and dignity. The welfare of mankind was at his heart; the loftiest thoughts were in his head; and a resistless authority spoke in his thundering voice. Wherever he was placed, he was an electrifying influence. In the Fifeshire parish of Kilmany, his burning eloquence startled religious formalists. In the Glasgow parish of St John's, his sleepless energies organised and animated a gigantic scheme for raising the sunken masses. In the Moral Philosophy Chair at St Andrews, and in the Divinity Chair at Edinburgh, his sway, though more placid, was far more sweeping. For many years he continued to send forth throughout the land crowds of students, glowing with his own zeal and shining with his own enlightenment. Then, at length, he entered upon his last great undertaking. With mighty effect, he led forth that large party which seceded from the Church of Scotland in 1843; with statesmanlike sagacity and never-failing resources he organised them into the Free Church; and, when his work was done, he was found in bed on a morning of May, placidly sleeping the sleep of death.

Dr Chalmers traversed the domains of literature and science as an ambassador of the Most High. Whatever valuable products he saw, he seized upon as lawful contributions to Christianity. Enriched with these, his sermons and discourses were fresh and striking in the extreme. In every one there was a grand and absorbing idea. As he revolved this in his capacious understanding, it continued to grow and dilate so mightily that it

was ever requiring a new expression. Metaphor after metaphor was lavished upon it. Over and over again was it rolled, continually increasing in grandeur and significance. Amid the hurry of his mind, he had no time to polish his sentences. They were left standing, rugged, unshapely, yet massively grand, while he pressed on to bring down his conclusion with overwhelming force upon the minds of his audience. "He buries his adversaries," said Jeffrey, "under the fragments of burning mountains." The principal works of Chalmers are his *Evidences of Christianity*, his *Natural Theology*, his *Lectures on the Romans*, and his famous *Astronomical Discourses*.

The other notable preachers of this period were the famous Edward Irving, the founder of the Irvingites; Dr Andrew Thomson, the eloquent minister of St George's, Edinburgh; and Archibald Alison, the author of an admirable *Essay on Taste*.

PHILOSOPHERS.

STEWART.—Dugald Stewart was the son of Dr Matthew Stewart, Professor of Mathematics in the University of Edinburgh, and was educated at Glasgow College. A more genial and serene intellect never existed. On whatever subject he approached, he shed a rich mellow light. As assistant and successor to his father, he invested mathematics with a new and foreign charm. As Professor of Moral Philosophy in the same college, his influence was still more potent. The fame of his eloquence soon traversed the land; and his class-room was thronged. He inspired his students with a love for the true and the beautiful; and he sent forth such minds as those of Thomas Brown and Francis Horner, to be living monuments of his power as a kindler of youthful genius. Dugald Stewart resigned his chair in 1810, in the zenith of his fame, and retired to a life of quiet literary exertion, at his country seat of Kinneill House, on the Forth. There he completed his greatest works, *Elements of the Philosophy of the Human Mind, Active and Moral*

Powers, Philosophical Essays, and a Dissertation on the Progress of Philosophy.

Stewart does not stand in the highest rank of philosophers. He is timid in speculation, and lax and illogical in arrangement. His chief aim is to improve the system of Reid. Its indistinctness he remedies by substituting definite philosophical terms for vague talk about "Common Sense" and "Instinct." Its bare hard outlines he softens, by covering them with the most graceful flowers of fancy. Its poverty of learning he relieves, by lavishing upon it multitudes of interesting facts about authors and their works.

BROWN.—Dugald Stewart's successor, in the Moral Philosophy chair, was Dr Thomas Brown, the
B. 1778. son of the minister of Kirkmabreck, in Kir-
D. 1820. cudbright. His keen forcible intellect made him a sort of prodigy. While still a school-boy, he convicted Stewart of a philosophical error. Before he was nineteen, he was writing a voluminous refutation of Darwin's *Zoonomia*. He could not even take a medical degree without astonishing the examiners by a thesis *De Somno*. While the Professor of Moral Philosophy, too, he continued his precocious habits. The patient plodding of ordinary mortals was too galling for his fiery genius. Nothing would content him but to dash off each of his lectures on the evening and morning before it was delivered. Nor did his renown as a metaphysician suffice him. Till his death, and in spite of repeated failures, he continued to publish elegant but tame verses.

Some of Brown's original speculations are rather wonderful ingenuities than valuable discoveries; but in exquisite analysis of Moral Systems, he has never been surpassed.

MACKINTOSH.—Sir James Mackintosh was born at Aldourie, on the banks of Loch Ness, and was
B. 1765. educated at the University of Aberdeen. After
D. 1832. taking his degree he was tossed about in the world for some time. His relatives could not afford to

train him for the Bar. Against his predilections, he went to Edinburgh to study medicine, and then to London to practise. A strong attachment to literature and metaphysics was an obstacle to professional success. At Salisbury and at Weymouth he failed to gain a livelihood; and his marriage, at the age of twenty-three, complicated his difficulties. Yet Mackintosh had been laying a solid foundation for fame and fortune. His *Vindiciæ Gallicæ*, a defence of the French Revolution against the attack of Burke, introduced him to the favour of Fox and Sheridan and the other Whig leaders. By means of his growing prosperity he was enabled to enter the legal profession and secure a standing in life. The Recordership of Bombay, along with Knighthood, was conferred upon him in 1804; and on his return, in 1811, he received a pension of £1200, and became an M.P., an honour which he retained till his death.

His greatest work is the *Dissertation on the Progress of Ethical Philosophy*, prefixed to the *Encyclopædia Britannica*. "Most readers," says Whewell, "will derive pleasure from the comprehensive views, the tolerant temper, and the love of virtuous feeling and literary beauty which they will find pervading this work."

NINTH PERIOD.

SECOND AGE OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY.

1830-1862

Characteristic:—An effort after novelty and originality.

Improved Arts of Enlightenment—Quantity and Quality of the Literature.

POETS:—*Tennyson—Longfellow—Other Poets.*

NOVELISTS:—*Bulwer—Thackeray—Dickens—Other Novelists.*

MISCELLANEOUS WRITERS:—*De Quincey—Irving—Other Writers.*

PHILOSOPHERS:—*Hamilton—Ferrier—Other Philosophers.*

HISTORIANS:—*Alison—Macaulay—Carlyle—Other Historians.*

In the quiet political atmosphere of the present age, the arts of enlightenment are flourishing luxuriantly. Steamboats and railways have brought distant countries near. The electric telegraph is flashing intelligence from clime to clime. The steam printing-press, a swarthy slave, is panting and groaning, night and day, to furnish a chronicle of every passing hour. Reading-rooms and literary institutions are opening wide their doors to catch every flying sheet of knowledge, and to present a full table of intellectual food for the literary epicure. To keep abreast of the information of the day has become one of the conventions of society; and the public are becoming inquisitive, if not studious; intelligent, if not wise.

The growing desire of information in the public mind has stirred all the activities of authors. Every nerve is strained to furnish something new. German ideas and modes of expression have been introduced to give a zest to our native literature. The most remote

regions have been explored to furnish materials for books of travel. The archives of history have been ransacked and re-ransacked in the hope that some fact may have been neglected. Simple-minded men are constantly writing the lives of common-place friends, illustrated by superabundant specimens of correspondence. The brains of periodical writers are constantly on the rack to hit upon some novel subject. There is not, in fact, a single foot of ground in the whole kingdom of literature, that has not been cultivated over and over again. Some restless spirits have even been compelled to occupy themselves in undermining some of its most precious provinces, such, for example, as theology. Yet, though literature has been increasing in quantity, it has, to a great extent, been impaired in quality. Some prose writers, trusting in the interest of their matter, have altogether neglected their manner. Others have striven to give pungency to their style by a mixture of every-day slang, and vague frothy rhetoric. Nor has the Muse escaped the mania. In her nervous anxiety to excite attention, she has turned her own brain. She is constantly in a paroxysm either of agony or of rapture. The most common-place trifle, as well as the grandest subject, lets loose her enthusiasm. Whatever the subject may be, she raves on in the same high-strung spasmodic style. Were it not for such poets as Tennyson and Longfellow, this would be a barren age in the annals of English poetry.

POETS.

TENNYSON.—The poet-laureate, and the greatest poet of the age, is Alfred Tennyson, the son of B. 1810. a Lincolnshire Rector, and a student of Trinity College, Cambridge. His genius did not come forth in its full power at first. Like a tree, it appeared a slender fairy-like form, and gradually developed its energies, under the influence of the advancing seasons, until it reached its mature strength and luxuriance. Accordingly, we detect a progress in all his successive volumes. In *Lilian and Claribel*, published in 1830,

he trifles with his own delicious and romantic fancies. In *The Miller's Daughter*, and *The Queen of the May*, which appeared in 1832, he is beginning to see the more healthy beauties of the palpable world around him. In *Locksley Hall*, and *Lady Clara Vere de Vere*, which were sent forth in 1842, his genius has entered the sacred chambers of imagery in the human soul. At length, in his latest works, *In Memoriam* and *Idylls of the King*, we see the fully-matured poet, with his whole nature responsive to the impulses of earth and heaven.

Like Wordsworth, Tennyson is averse to the jar and whirl of public life. On the salary of his Laureateship, and with an additional pension of two hundred pounds, he has retired to his villa, embowered amid the orchards of the Isle of Wight. There, as in a sort of poetical dream-land, he loiters about, with his soul attuned to catch the wandering breezes of inspiration. When any rare ideas come to him, he cherishes them fondly. They are not treated as mere passing guests, but continue the inmates of his imagination until they take a form and colour from their radiant dwelling-place. In course of time, their figures become so clearly and sharply defined that it is difficult to give them adequate expression. Second-hand poetical phraseology would merely hide their graceful and delicate forms. With nice art, he labours to drape them in a simple and transparent garb of Saxon words. When he succeeds, as in his descriptions of scenery, the effect is striking, exquisite and graphic beyond all precedent. When he fails, as in some of his metaphysical musings, it is because the ideas are shadowy, and not because the language is obscure.

Tennyson's great poem is his *In Memoriam*, a series of elegies on the death of Arthur Henry Hallam, the son of the historian. It is the history of a mighty sorrow acting on a nature of varied and exquisite sensibilities. At first the poet lies prostrate in a stupor of grief. At length his grief takes a palpable form and becomes the reigning inmate of his soul. As the years roll on, all his faculties in turn obey its melan-

choly influence. Memory dotes upon the brilliant accomplishments of the departed friend. Imagination pants to follow him into a higher state of excellence. The Intellect loses itself in the mysteries of this sorrowful universe. At last, Faith arises with its soothing influence; grief is subdued; and all his restless yearnings subside into the calm hope of meeting his friend in Heaven.

LONGFELLOW.—The most popular American poet is Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, who was B. 1807. born at Portland, in Maine, and studied at Bowdoin College, Brunswick. The circumstances of his life have been favourable. While yet a mere stripling, he was presented to the Professorship of Modern Languages in his *Alma Mater*. To qualify himself for the office, he devoted three and a-half years to the study of the literatures of France, Italy, Spain, Germany, Holland, and England, in their native climes. Scarcely had he occupied his chair for six years, when a similar position in Harvard College was offered to him. Again he visited Europe to reinvigorate his knowledge, and again he returned laden with the richest spoils from modern literature. He still continues to pursue his poetical career in his academic retreat.

Amid the gigantic and headlong energies of the New World, Longfellow scarcely appears to be at home. He is, in fact, somewhat of a dilettante. His taste is exquisite; his feeling is tinged with sentimentalism; and his fancy is soft and luxurious. He avoids the sight of the deformed, the foul, and the harrowing. In all his works he loves rather to look upon the artistic elements in the world. His translations, and some of his original pieces, treat of the romantic incidents and associations of mediæval life. His domestic poems give a picturesque view of human suffering as well as of human joy. Even in detailing the horrors of slavery, he will not disturb the graceful air of his verses by the slightest outburst of indignation. The same finical taste is also seen in the rhyme of his chief poems. *Evangeline*, a tale of Acadia or Nova Scotia, is written

in hexameter verse; and *Hiawatha*, an Indian legend, limps along in trochees.

MINOR POETS.—There are so many good poets in this period that it is very difficult to make a selection. Some of them, indeed, are so excellent that they will ere long gain a place in the first rank.

There are two who excel, both in comic and in serious poetry. The most of Thomas Hood's smaller pieces sparkle with puns, and his ballad of *Eugene Aram*, *Bridge of Sighs*, and *Song of the Shirt*, breathe a tender and heart-breaking pathos. William Edmonstoune Aytoun, Professor of Rhetoric at Edinburgh, has mimicked the spasmodic school of poetry in his *Firmilian*, and has revived the heroic strain of Scott in his *Bothwell*.

A few have become famous by fugitive pieces, originally contributed to periodicals. Of these, the most remarkable are—Thomas Aird, author of *The Devil's Dream*; David Macbeth Moir, the *Delta* of Blackwood's Magazine; Winthrop Mackworth Praed, the author of the *Red Fisherman*; and the famous American poet, Edgar Allan Poe.

The great majority, however, of the rising poets strike a very ambitious key-note, and belong to what has been called the Spasmodic School of poetry. Among these there are—Philip James Bailey, the author of *Festus*; Sydney Dobell, the author of the *Roman* and *Balder*; and Gerald Massey, the author of *Babe Christabel* and *Craigcrook*. The most promising pupil, however, of this school is Alexander Smith, a native of Kilmarnock, who has shewn a wonderful power of word-painting in his *Life Drama*, *City Poems*, and, his last and best work, *Edwin of Deira*.

Several females have also mingled in the contest for poetic fame. We can only mention the celebrated Elizabeth Barrett Browning; Frances Brown, the blind poetess; and Isa Craig, the writer of the prize poem on Burns.

NOVELISTS.

BULWER.—A most versatile novelist of the present day is Sir Edward Bulwer Lytton. He **B. 1805.** is the son of General Bulwer of Haydon Hall, Norfolk, and was educated at Cambridge. The luxurious atmosphere in which he was reared did not enervate his mind. His learning is great; his experience of life wide and varied; his faculty in composition ever ready; and his industry unflagging. Though he succeeded to his rich maternal estate of Knebworth in 1843, he still toils as hard as any literary hack. There is scarcely a kind of novel of which he has not produced several examples. His first set, including *Pelham*, were fashionable. His second, among which *Rienzi* stands prominent, were romantic. His next, of which *Ernest Maltravers* is a specimen, were sentimental. Then came several striking historical fictions, headed by *The Last of the Barons*. At length, in his later works, such as *The Caxtons*, *My Novel*, and *What will he do with It*, he has attained a truthful and pleasing style of domestic portraiture, which furnishes a striking contrast to the unhealthy moral tone of some of his early books. While Bulwer has thus been producing novel after novel, in rapid succession, his efforts, in other spheres of literary labour, have been unceasing. He has been writing poems, pamphlets, translations, and essays; he has been making speeches to students; he has been gaining a place among the most popular dramatists of the day; and he has become one of the chief supports of the Tory party in the House of Commons.

THACKERAY.—William Makepeace Thackeray began life in circumstances which were rather **B. 1811.** peculiar. His father was an Indian civilian, and his birth-place was Calcutta. While still a mere child, he was sent to England to be educated at the Charter House School. After completing his studies at Cambridge, he found himself the master of a handsome competency. His passion was to be a painter, and he went away to frequent the great continental seats of

the Fine Arts. The chief circumstance which led him to turn his attention to Literature, was the loss of a great part of his patrimony. The mind of Thackeray did not appear at first in its full stature. Like all great spirits, his genius expanded with the advance of time. The varied picture of London life was imprinting itself more and more deeply on his sensitive nature. Whatever was good or pure was swelling the fountain of his manly love and reverence. Whatever was false or worthless was increasing the pent-up storm of his sarcasm, irony, and invective. The numerous sketches, also, which he was contributing to *Fraser's Magazine* and *Punch*, were developing his singular powers of description. *The Shabby-Genteel Story* represented the consummate hypocrisy of a heartless libertine. *Barry Lyndon* narrated the impudent lies and artifices by which an Irish adventurer piloted his way among the dangers of fashionable life. In the *Snob Papers* those incarnate shams that infest society were introduced, and were mercilessly stripped of all their absurd pretensions. In *Jeames's Diary* a self-complacent footman describes, in the Cockney dialect, and with the spelling of a great genius in orthography, how he rose from the servants' hall, and what a resplendent and striking figure he made in the drawing-rooms of the Aristocracy. At length, in 1846, Thackeray came forth in all the greatness of his satirical powers. In his *Vanity Fair* he held up before the world a severely truthful representation of its own painted iniquity. The scene was full of gilded show, laborious idling, artful juggling, and hollow merriment. Moving in and out among the crowd that thronged the Fair were certain notorious pleasure-hunters. Becky Sharp, a green-eyed serpent in human form, wriggled and sparkled, fascinated and stung every person she met. Her husband, Rawdon Crawley, a big brainless dragoon, plunged headlong into every mad game. Jos Sedley, a puffy, over-fed, absurd Indian official, imbibed every dainty. Stalking about, self-complacently, like a lord of the creation, George Osborne, an ambrosial-whiskered officer, received all the blessings and enjoyments of life as matters of right. Al-

most the only persons who seemed to be unselfish were Amelia Sedley and William Dobbin. Amelia, a tender-hearted, innocent girl, threw herself away upon George Osborne. Dobbin, an ungainly Major, bestowed his large and honest heart upon Amelia. The book was at once declared a master-piece, and raised its author immediately to the highest place among novelists. Dickens and he were henceforth joint-sovereigns of the populous region of fiction.

Since the publication of *Vanity Fair*, the style of Thackeray has been slightly changed. He has revived certain historic scenes. His *Esmond*, for example, has introduced us into the delightful society of Addison and Steele; and his *Virginians* has presented us with a vivid picture of English Life and Manners during the middle of the eighteenth century. He has also portrayed more favourable specimens of human nature. The old Colonel, in the *Newcomes*, is the ideal of a true-hearted chivalrous gentleman, and George Warrington, in *Pendennis*, is a prince both in head and heart. Thackeray has been labouring in other fields besides that of the novel. His lectures, on the *English Humorists* and on the *Four Georges*, were delivered with great success, both in Britain and in America. Under his editorship, the *Cornhill Magazine* has become one of the most successful of periodicals. In this journal he is at present writing a new novel, entitled *The Adventures of Philip on his Way through the World*.

DICKENS.—Charles Dickens, a native of Landport, B. 1812. Portsmouth, was brought up amid circumstances very favourable to his peculiar genius. His removal to London, at an early age, placed him on a boundless field of observation. In whatever situation he was, his quick faculties caught up fresh and humorous peculiarities. As an attorney's clerk, he became familiar with those pompous legal absurdities which he afterwards burlesqued so inimitably. As reporter and critic for the *Morning Chronicle*, he acquired that knowledge of men and manners which gave such a pleasing variety to his books. At the same time, his eye

was ever open to the scenes of the streets, and his mind revelled in old plays and novels. Furnished with such resources, the facile powers of Dickens soon achieved wonders. His *Sketches by Boz*, published in the *Chronicle*, brought him into notice. A publisher employed him to write the *Pickwick Papers*. Number after number appeared, and seemed to open up a new and charming world. It was a world of country excursions, roadside refreshments, festive meetings, and grotesque incidents. It was a world of unclouded sunshine, buoyant mirth, and overflowing hospitality. The great majority of the reading public lived in it for months, and cultivated the friendship of its genial inhabitants,—of the bland, smiling, unsophisticated Mr Pickwick; of Sam Weller, the unabashed, the ready-handed, the ready-witted; and of his father, the rotund old coachman, that incorporation of heavy humour, heavy wisdom, and solid feeding. The publication of the *Pickwick Papers* was the introduction to a brilliant course of success. A work from Dickens came to be regarded as a most important item in the yearly course of entertainments. *Nicholas Nickleby*, *Oliver Twist*, *Old Curiosity Shop*, *Barnaby Rudge*, *Martin Chuzzlewit*, *Dombey and Son*, *David Copperfield*, *Bleak House*, *Little Dorrit*, *A Tale of Two Cities*, and *Great Expectations*, followed each other in rapid succession. In some of these he continued to charm every reader with his fresh and buoyant humour. In others he tried to heighten the interest by eccentricities of character, and by startling plots. In all, he shewed a power of vivid and poetic imagination, which no novelist has ever surpassed. His description of the "No Popery Riots" of 1780, in *Barnaby Rudge*, and a wreck, in *David Copperfield*, are among the grand passages in English literature. Dickens is one of the most versatile men of the day. In private theatricals he is a great comic and tragic actor. In an after-dinner-speech he has few equals. He has also effected the most complete representation of fictitious narrative on record, by not only writing incidents and characters, but also vividly realizing them by his masterly gift of reading.

Dickens long conducted a monthly periodical, entitled *Household Words*, and he is now the Editor of *All the Year Round*. His shorter stories, especially the *Christmas Carol*, are very popular.

OTHER NOVELISTS.—Immense are the shoals of novels that float on the surface of our literature. Amidst such a terrific jostle many that are really excellent must be kept down and hidden. We can only mention those that stand out prominently.

Some of our best novelists have depicted scenes more or less connected with naval life. Every one is familiar with the sea stories of Captain Marryat and James Fenimore Cooper. The greatest authors, however, of this class are the highly-gifted Charles Kingsley, the author of *Westward Ho!* and James Hannay, the brilliant Editor of the "Edinburgh Courant," and the author of *Eustace Conyers*, *Satire and Satirists*, and *Essays contributed to the Quarterly Review*.

Many have founded their stories on history. Of these the best known are—the voluminous G. P. R. James, William Harrison Ainsworth, and Charles Lever, the author of *Charles O'Malley*.

The great majority of novelists portray domestic life. The witty and flashing Douglas Jerrold, author of *Mrs Caudle's Curtain Lectures*, has described London life and misery in his *St Giles and St James*. Benjamin Disraeli, the leader of the Tories in the House of Commons, has given some thoughtful and satirical pictures in his *Coningsby*. Samuel Warren, in *Passages from the Diary of a Late Physician*, is deeply affecting, and in *Ten Thousand a-Year*, is exceedingly humorous. Anthony Trollope, the author of *Doctor Thorne* and *Framley Parsonage*, is at home in the secluded atmosphere of English clerical life. Of late, too, Wilkie Collins has become famous for his ingenious and startling plot in *The Woman in White*.

American scenes have been described by Thomas Chandler Haliburton, the author of *The Clockmaker*, under the name of "Sam Slick;" by Nathaniel Hawthorne, the author of *The Scarlet Letter*; and by Dr

Robert M. Bird, the author of the wild and engrossing Indian tale, named *Nick of the Woods*.

The palm of popularity, however, has been borne away by female authors. The *Uncle Tom* of Harriet Beecher Stowe presents a startling picture of the manifold horrors of slavery. The *Jane Eyre* of Charlotte Brontë analyses, in a vigorous but rather morbid style, the complicated feelings of the human heart. The *John Halifax* of Miss Muloch describes an ideal of a gentleman. Above all, the *Adam Bede*, *The Mill on the Floss*, and the *Silas Marner* of George Eliot give some of the freshest and most powerful pictures of English rural life that have ever appeared.

MISCELLANEOUS WRITERS.

DE QUINCEY.—The life of Thomas de Quincey was full of hardship and temptation. In his boyhood he lost his father, a Manchester merchant. Severe discipline drove him to elope from Manchester Grammar School, and to defy the authority of his guardians. In disgrace, he was suffered to live in Wales on a guinea a-week. There he trudged about, an economizing explorer, often passing a summer night among the ferns on the hill side. A craving to mingle in the intellectual world then came upon him; and he cast himself upon the bare and pitiless streets of London. He was a wasted and hunger-bitten outcast when his friends discovered him and took him home. These sufferings of De Quincey were followed by a train of sorrows. When he was at Oxford, about 1804, his frame became racked with disease. As a remedy, he was advised to try opium. This mighty sorceress, in the form of a drug, gradually wound her fascinating chains round his quivering body. After several years she treated him like a manacled slave. In his cottage among the hills of Westmoreland, he was wont to sit day after day in hopeless passivity, haunted by phantoms which his own shattered nerves had conjured up. Sleep brought no rest. The land of dreams was a universe of boundless space, and thronged with the most stupen-

dous and awful figures. His poor slumber-bound soul fell down paralyzed, and he awoke, crying, "I will sleep no more." It is true that, by degrees, he cast off this habit, but it was like wrenching the soul from the body. The last years of De Quincey were spent at Lasswade, near Edinburgh.

De Quincey's memory was tenacious of facts and theories of every sort. His mind was strong, subtle, and restless. His imagination was haunted by the grandest forms. His language was full of power, beauty, and delicacy. He was a man, in fact, equal to the highest mental undertaking. Yet his faculties were dissipated on magazine articles. And even these are more like exquisite talk than severe literary composition. He has a plan, but he never rigidly adheres to it. On the slightest temptation, he turns aside to enter upon the full details of an incident which has no real interest, or to discuss some literary controversy which has no connection with the subject on hand, or to give an acute analysis of some feeling which adds nothing to the general effect. A collection of De Quincey's works has been published, entitled *Selections, Grave and Gay*. The most remarkable of these are his *Suspiria de Profundis*, his *Confessions of an English Opium Eater*, and his *Autobiographical Sketches*.

WASHINGTON IRVING.—Washington Irving was descended from an old Scottish family, and
B. 1783. was born at New York in 1783. His nature
D. 1859. was not fitted for business. The profession of a lawyer was irksome, and he gave it up. He then became a Liverpool merchant; but the firm of Irving Brothers became bankrupt, and he abandoned commerce for ever. The only public capacity in which he afterwards appeared was that of Secretary to the United States Legation at London. When Washington Irving was at liberty to indulge his own moods he became a genial citizen of the world. Wherever humour or beauty was to be found, his genius was at home. In his wanderings through Europe and America he was always to be seen on the sunny side of the way.

Every scene which he visited evoked the play of his happy faculties. His residence in his native city suggested the quaint and droll *History of New York*. His sojourn amid the ancestral scenery of England inspired *The Sketch-Book* and *Bracebridge Hall*. A tour which he made on the Continent furnished him with incidents for his *Tales of a Traveller*. More fruitful still were the years which he spent in ransacking the archives at Madrid. The romantic annals of Spain were rich fields, from which he could gather many a choice flower; and the *Tales of The Alhambra*, *The Conquest of Granada*, *The Life of Columbus*, and *The Companions of Columbus*, were the result. His last journey into the far west of America gave rise to *The Tour on the Prairies*. The close of Irving's life was devoted to the composition of a *Life of Washington*, in his pleasant villa of Sunnyside, by the banks of the Hudson.

The greatest works of Irving are his *Sketch-Book*, and his *Bracebridge Hall*. In these, he appears as a holiday wanderer, and the rich and storied country of England is his field of observation. The bustle and business of active life are completely overlooked. His whole soul goes forth in search of the amusing and the picturesque. Scenes pervaded by romantic associations of the past are his special delight. He lingers in secluded villages among old-world customs. He takes up his abode in hoary mansions, noting the primitive festivities and the unsophisticated characters of the inmates. He dreams away whole days in the enchanted region of Stratford-on-Avon, the British Museum, and Westminster Abbey. He is even found groping his way among the crooked streets and blind alleys of London, and dwelling fondly upon the faded glories of Little Britain and the Boar's Head Tavern.

The ideas of Irving are simply grouped. His quaint words and quotations from the old English authors add a touch of the picturesque. Over these his humour plays kindly and pleasant, as the sunshine of a summer afternoon. Occasionally there intervenes a serious sentiment, like a passing cloud, giving a varied and subdued effect to the whole. And, meanwhile,

his language moves on with the full, placid, and regular flow of a water-course among the meadow-lands of England.

OTHER WRITERS.—John Ruskin, the son of a London wine-merchant, has written upon art with richly pictorial eloquence, in his *Modern Painters*, *Seven Lamps of Architecture*, and *Stones of Venice*. Hugh Miller, that celebrated stone-mason who, with a chisel in his hand, hewed out his way to a place in the first rank among geologists, has developed, with incomparable power, the sublime poetry of science. The *Essays*, *Sketches*, and *Autobiography* of Leigh Hunt contain many charming pictures; and the *Imaginary Conversations* of Walter Savage Landor abound in original thoughts and illustrations. There are two American writers who have gained a high place in English literature, William Ellery Channing, the author of several eloquent essays; and Ralph Waldo Emerson, who has proved himself, in his *Representative Men*, and *English Traits*, to be a complete master of bare, blunt and idiomatic Saxon. Of remaining writers, we can only name Arthur Helps, Julius Hare, and Harriet Martineau.

PHILOSOPHERS.

HAMILTON.—Sir William Hamilton was the son of Dr Hamilton, a Glasgow Professor, and was
B. 1788. educated at the college of his native town, and
D. 1856. afterwards at Oxford. As representative of the Hamiltons of Preston, he established his claim to a long-dormant baronetcy. Though trained for the Scottish bar, he devoted himself to philosophy; and, in 1836, was appointed Professor of Logic and Metaphysics in the University of Edinburgh. Hamilton was perhaps the most learned of modern philosophers. In classical lore, Greek philosophy, scholastic theology, German metaphysics, history, anatomy, physiology—in all the great provinces of knowledge, with the exception of mathematics and physical science, he was at home. And not only had he traversed every region, but he had seen its bar-

renness and its fertility. He had collected all its choice products, and he had discerned its relation to all the other regions. He had made it, in fact, contribute to that comprehensive and rigid theory of existence which was forming itself in his capacious intellect. This strong bias of Hamilton's mind prevented him from appearing often as an author. His pursuit of truth was so keen, that he could scarcely stop to communicate his acquisitions. If he did take up his pen, it was generally to interpret or elucidate some favourite author. Accordingly, besides his *Lectures on Logic and Metaphysics*, delivered to his students, his only great works are an annotated edition of Reid, and an incomplete annotated edition of Stewart. Hamilton's speculations are the massive and valuable fragments of a grand scheme of philosophy; and his sentences are remarkable for the precision, pith, and brevity with which they express his ideas.

FERRIER.—One of the most original books of the age is the *Institutes of Metaphysic*, by Professor B. 1806. Ferrier of St Andrews. According to him, Metaphysic, the science of being, has not been properly treated by philosophers. It does not consist of the vague and erroneous fancies of ordinary thinking. Nor does it consist of the chaotic mass of dogmas heaped together by psychologists. It is a regular and harmonious system, based upon necessary truths, and rigidly reasoned out. Its great divisions are three. Epistemology discovers what any intelligence knows. Agnology discovers what any intelligence is ignorant of. Making use of these two discoveries, Ontology declares what necessarily exists. The first two divisions, in fact, are two great pillars, which are found to be the counterparts of each other. The third is an arch erected upon these, spanning that great abyss of speculation in which so many explorers have perished, and opening up a distinct and well-paved way to the great result of metaphysic—that there must exist an Everlasting Intelligence in synthesis with all things. This is but a meagre outline of the theory; but all the details are equally harmonious

and beautiful. The long chains of propositions are demonstrated with mathematical severity. Interspersed are pages of luminous explanation, passages of sonorous eloquence, frequent flashings of new and exquisite ideas, and occasional outbursts of rich and racy humour. Never before was a metaphysical book written with such perspicuity and literary fascination. The circle of its admirers is yearly widening, and posterity will probably place it on the same shelf with the works of Berkeley.

OTHER PHILOSOPHERS.—There are three writers who have made important contributions to mental science. Richard Whately, Archbishop of Dublin, has written an able work on the *Elements of Logic*. John Stuart Mill has endeavoured to supply the deficiencies of Bacon in his masterly *System of Logic*. For a similar purpose, William Whewell, the learned Master of Trinity College, Cambridge, has published *The History and Philosophy of the Inductive Sciences*.

Never had students a better philosophical teacher than the late Professor Spalding, of St Andrews. His noble nature and richly-gifted mind won their admiration; and the consummate discipline of his class developed and braced their faculties. His accurate and extensive scholarship, and his exquisite literary accomplishments, may be seen in his *History of English Literature*, and his *Treatise on Logic*.

Under this head we may class several eminent theological writers. There are—Isaac Taylor, the author of *The Natural History of Enthusiasm*; Dr Ralph Wardlaw, author of *Christian Ethics* and *Discourses on the Socinian Controversy*; Dr Robert S. Candlish, minister of Free St George's, Edinburgh, and author of *Life in a Risen Saviour*; J. Frederick Denison Maurice, author of *Theological Essays*, and *The Religions of the World*; and John Tulloch, Principal of St Mary's College, St Andrews, and author of *Theism*, *Leaders of the Reformation*, and *English Puritanism*.

HISTORIANS.

ALISON.—Archibald Alison, a son of the Rev. Archibald Alison, author of the essay on *Taste*, **B. 1792.** was born at Kenley in Shropshire. After studying for the Scottish Bar at the University of Edinburgh, he travelled on the Continent. While he was gazing upon the entry of the Allies into Paris, in 1814, the thought of describing the late continental wars occurred to him. The work appeared in ten volumes, between 1839 and 1842, and was entitled *The History of Europe from the commencement of the French Revolution to the Restoration of the Bourbons*. It was a work displaying great energy and research. There were many valuable statistical details, and speculations on political economy. The events, especially the battles, were described with animation. The author was also a chivalrous champion of Tory principles. The success of the History was so great that eight volumes have been added, bringing the narrative down to the accession of Louis Napoleon. Alison was appointed Sheriff of Lanarkshire in 1834. For his services to the Tory party he was made a Baronet in 1852.

MACAULAY.—Thomas Babington Macaulay, the descendant of a Scottish family of ministers, **B. 1800.** was born at Rothley Temple, in Leicestershire. **D. 1859.** The career of the young man at Trinity College, Cambridge, was a complete triumphal procession. He made himself master of every book that fell in his way. His poems on *Pompeii* and *Evening* gained for him the Chancellor's medals. At the Union, that nursery of embryo statesmen, he became a very king of debate. The Craven Scholarship, a Fellowship and a Degree were conferred upon him. When he was only twenty-five, the Edinburgh Review opened its pages to his clever essay on *Milton*. It became known throughout the country that a great intellectual luminary was rising. The brilliant gifts of Macaulay could not fail to ensure a successful career in public life. Though a member of the English Bar he was invited to enter the

arena of politics. The Whigs took notice of him, and made him a Commissioner of Bankruptcy. He obtained a seat in the House of Commons as member for Calne, and became an able and accomplished advocate of the Reform Bill. His services were rewarded with the office of legal adviser to the Supreme Council of Calcutta; the historical and political Essays, which he continued to contribute to the Edinburgh Review, were increasing his reputation; and when he returned from India, at the end of a few years, higher honours awaited him. He was appointed, in succession, Secretary at War, under the government of Lord Melbourne; and Paymaster General of the Forces, under the government of Lord John Russell. The citizens of Edinburgh returned him to Parliament; and, though they rejected him in 1846, for his support of the Maynooth Grant, they made an ample apology in 1852, by re-electing him without his solicitation.

By this time Macaulay had entered upon his great work *The History of England from the Accession of James II.* In his town residence, at the Albany, and in the British Museum, that great temple of Literature, the stupendous undertaking proceeded. With consummate skill and decision, he threaded the mazes of by-gone literature, exploring the chaotic and heterogeneous mass of records. With exquisite taste he gathered the jewels of history from voluminous state papers, crabbed manuscripts, tables of statistics, tattered newspapers, trashy novels, and doggerel verses. Then came the mightiest part of the task. Under the magic influence of his imagination, the immense collection of materials slowly arranged themselves into a mimic representation of the past. His rich fancy tinted the scene with fresh and lively colours; and his simple and transparent Saxon rested upon the objects like clear and intense sunlight, shewing every form in sharp and vigorous outline. The England of the seventeenth century was before the public. They saw London, built of wood and plaster, with glaring sign-boards swinging before the shops; the open country, half moorland and forest, and infested by mounted highwaymen;

the beau, in an ample flaxen wig, mincing his way to his coffee-house; and long trains of pack-horses, transporting goods along the miry by-roads of the remote counties. The chief political actors started into life, in all their resplendent virtues, or in all their dark iniquity; great battles and controversies were fought over again; and, as the scenes continued to change, the spectator could discern the growing strength and symmetry of the English constitution.

The close of Macaulay's life was sad. A disease of the heart, with which he had been for some time afflicted, was fast approaching a crisis. His *History*, which he intended to bring down to his own time, had only reached the close of the reign of William III. The Queen had made him a Lord, but he felt that he could not enjoy his lofty dignity long. At length, in December 1859, just after he had been entertaining a Christmas party at his own house in Kensington, he suddenly expired.

Macaulay introduced a new style into our literature. His language is simple, pithy, and idiomatic. His sentences are short, pointed, and antithetical. He loves to be definite and particular, and he introduces allusions with a fulness and an appropriateness hitherto unexampled. The same qualities, combined with a wonderful power of fiery galloping rhyme, characterise his *Lays of Ancient Rome*.

CARLYLE.—Perhaps the most powerful mind of the age is that of Thomas Carlyle, a native of Middlebie, in Dumfriesshire. From his father, a humble farmer, he inherited an honest and vigorous nature. No sooner had he entered the University of Edinburgh, than the original cast of his mind began to appear. The mechanical routine of college studies he disliked. The ministry he felt he could not consistently enter. His whole soul was devoted to Literature; and, until he could adopt it as a calling, he taught a school in Fife for two years. After Carlyle had become an author by profession, he began to work in an unusual field. While he was in Edinburgh, contributing to Brewster's *En-*

cyclopædia, he translated Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister*. When he had retired to his farm of Craigenputtoch, in Dumfriesshire, his German studies were prosecuted with greater vigour than ever. His small oasis, in the midst of the barren moors, was, in fact, an outlying province of Germany. German books and periodicals encumbered his library table. German letters passed between him and Goethe. His thoughts assumed a German form; and, while he was sauntering among his corn-fields, or jogging on his pony over "the moss," he was forming the plan of that rich grotesque medley, *Sartor Resartus*. A new era in Carlyle's life dates from the time of his removal to London, in 1834. He began to take a more serious view of his profession. He kept aloof from the hubbub of life, and, in his quiet house at Chelsea, devoted himself to his work. Instead of writing on more literary subjects, he now strove to stir the public to lofty action; and his *Letters of Cromwell*, his *Life of John Sterling*, and his *History of Frederick the Great*, presented noble specimens of mankind for imitation. At the last of these works, he is still labouring.

From his isolated position, Carlyle has few sympathies in common with the ordinary herd of worldlings. Whatever falls short of his high ideal, he treats with pitiless indignation. Not expediency, but absolute right is what he demands. Life is far too earnest and dreadful to be trifled away. Many favourite pursuits he brands as quackeries, and many favourite opinions he denounces as shams. There are a few pithy maxims which are constantly coming up in his writings. Silence, according to him, is more expressive than speech. Action is more dignified than thought. Duty is more imperative than happiness. The true government is a system of hero-worship, and the true precept of life is not "Know thyself," but "Know what thou canst work at."

Carlyle treats a subject with the strong and ungainly energies of a giant. With a mighty grasp he seizes it, and brings all his faculties to bear upon it. His memory heaps it with allusions. His imagination plays

around it with the fitful gleams of poetry. His humour leaps over it with boisterous and whimsical gambols. Whatever is good, his love embraces with tenderness; and whatever is false, his satire spurns and buffets with stormy indignation. His language, meanwhile, is singularly abrupt and uncouth. Outlandish Germanisms are introduced without the slightest explanation or apology. To form a graphic phrase, two very dissimilar words are often joined together, and appear as if they had been welded by the heat of his imagination. Some sentences are inverted and twisted into the most grotesque shapes. Others are mere rude fragments, and lie sprawling without a single leg to rest upon. Not a few stand all on fire with the ardours of eloquence, like masses of lava thrown out from a volcano. Interspersed among these, are spaces blooming with the flowers of fancy, and shedding a beauty and fragrance over the whole rugged field.

Yet with this strange clumsy style, Carlyle has achieved the greatest results. His Biographies represent the spirit of a man's life with a vigour and completeness which have never been equalled in the present age; his Histories contain the best descriptions that have ever been given of the mainsprings and inner movements of great events; and his Miscellaneous Essays are inexhaustible store-houses, from which needy authors furnish themselves with fresh ideas and opinions.

OTHER HISTORIANS.—There are two American authors who have attained great skill in writing annals. George Bancroft, in his *History of the United States*, has shewn much learning and vigour; and William H. Prescott, in his *Reign of Ferdinand and Isabella*, *Conquest of Mexico*, *Conquest of Peru*, and *History of Philip II.*, is one of the most graceful and animated of historians.

James Anthony Froude and Henry Thomas Buckle have employed extensive erudition and a great array of arguments to controvert certain prevalent historical views. The former has vindicated many of the odious deeds of Henry VIII. in a *History of England*; the

latter has avowed several new and startling theories in his *History of Civilisation*.

Three scholars have written classical history with great ability. Thomas Arnold, the admirable headmaster of Rugby, left behind him the fragment of a *Roman History*. George Grote, a London banker, and Connop Thirlwall, now Bishop of St Davids, have both written a *History of Greece*; the former from a democratic, the latter from an anti-democratic, point of view.

Biographical writers may also be classed under this head. Of these the most notable are—John Gibson Lockhart, the son-in-law and biographer of Scott; John Forster, author of *Statesmen of the Commonwealth* and *Life of Goldsmith*; George Henry Lewes, author of *A Biographical History of Philosophy*, and *Life of Goethe*; David Masson, editor of "Macmillan's Magazine," and author of *Life and Times of John Milton*; and William Hepworth Dixon, editor of the "Athenæum," and author of *Lives of John Howard, William Penn, Admiral Blake, and Lord Bacon*.

THE END.

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